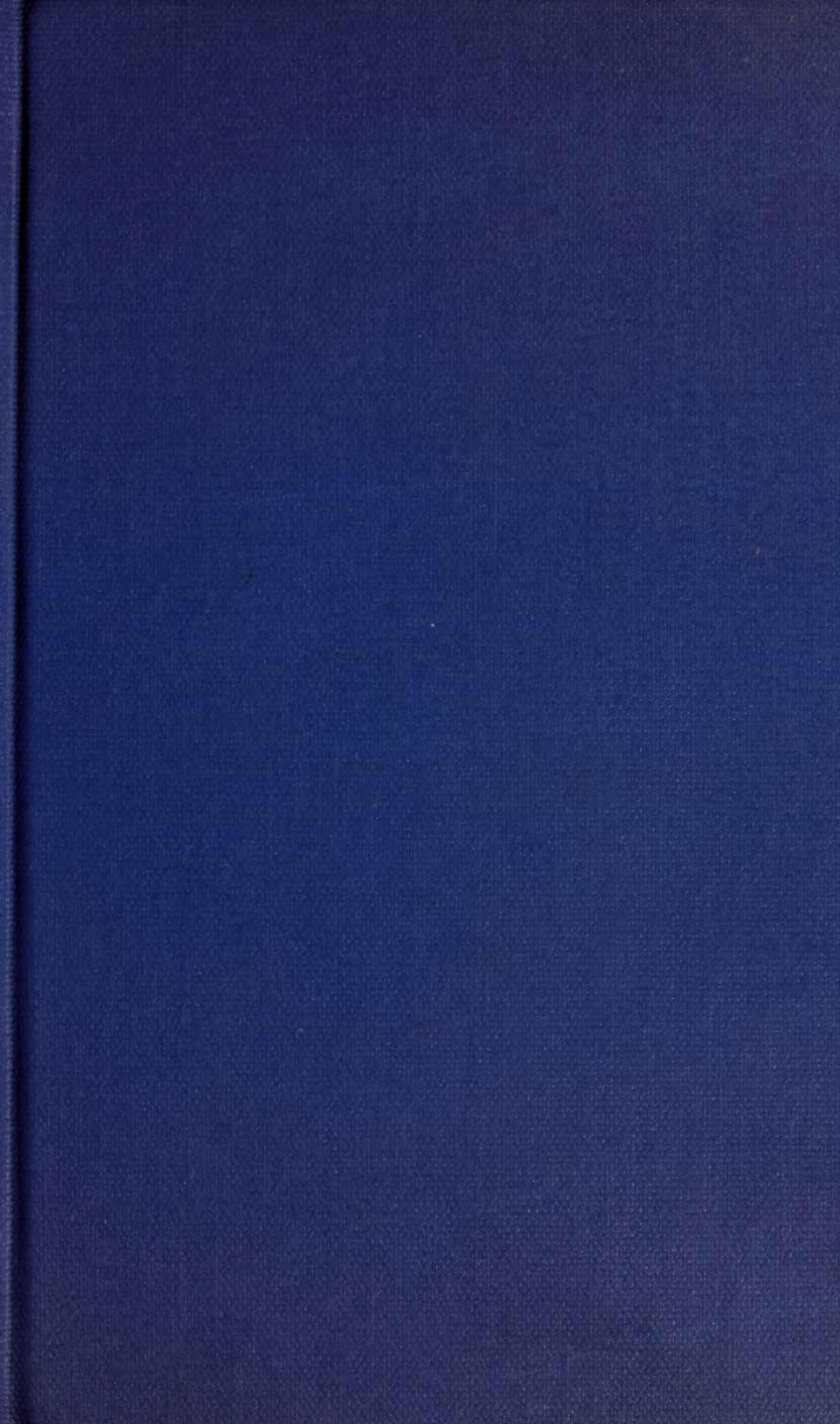






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THE LETTERS

OF

VETUS.

PART III.

Can Hat
V.

FROM No. XVII. TO No. XXXVII. INCLUSIVE;

WITH SOME UNDER DIFFERENT SIGNATURES:

Being those which were published in the Course of the Year 1813.

TO WHICH HAVE BEEN ADDED

A PREFACE AND NOTES.

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STAT VETUS.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELEY, AND JONES,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1814.

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Foreign States know how to estimate your cha-
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posterity will follow. Our children's children will
acknowledge with gratitude those wise principles,
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foundation of prosperity for Great Britain, of free-
dom for Europe, and of lasting celebrity for the civi-

Printed by C. Baldwin,
New Bridge-street, London.

sent age.

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY, K.G.

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

OF the sentiments which I bear you, the LETTERS of VETUS contain such ample vindication, that I shall not here enumerate the public virtues by which those sentiments were inspired.

Foreign States know how to estimate your character, and have set an example of justice which posterity will follow. Our children's children will acknowledge with gratitude those wise principles, and splendid actions, which have laid a deep and solid foundation of prosperity for Great Britain, of freedom for Europe, and of lasting celebrity for the present age.

For me, my Lord, it is essential that I should make a declaration, due to your fame and honour, though in some respects a sacrifice of my own importance in society; that when I expressed most warmly my applause of your conduct, and my earnest wishes for your accession to power, I had heard only, or read of you, as a statesman of superior race; and that while faction was loudly reproaching your Lordship with the consent and countenance afforded to these letters, you were an utter stranger to the source whence they originated—to the person, name, and existence of

THE AUTHOR.

London, January 10, 1814.

PREFACE.

THE attention which these Letters have invariably excited may, perhaps, suggest itself to some uncharitable readers, as the true reason why the author has thought fit to continue them down to the present period. It certainly affords him a sufficient motive for collecting and re-publishing that portion of them which has yet had no existence but in the columns of the Times; but it is likewise an accommodation due both to friends and enemies: to the former a debt of kindness; to the latter an open defiance, called for by the gallantry and courtesy of war; since it might stagger the inveteracy of the most resolute critic to search the deep files of a London newspaper, for topics of just or unjust vituperation, against the "arrogance, the violence, the shallowness, and inconsistency of VETUS."

He offers himself therefore to these priests of Nemesis a prompt and determined victim. No objections which deserve to be refuted, or indeed remembered, either for their own sake, or for that of the objectors, have been made to the doctrines of the Author. Not one of his principles has been

fairly met; not one of his facts has been disputed; in none of the multitude of public questions which he has occasionally touched upon, or argued and discussed, has he been attacked on *public* grounds. His unbiassed zeal for objects purely national, has gained for him the highest proof of respect from those whose nation is their party, to wit, their unceasing abuse. His absolute disdain of all factions, and his steady and ardent recommendation and pursuit of whatever is most glorious for that country, which faction loves as the vulture does his prey, have implicated VERUS in alternate strife with those of various interests and colours; as each had thrown up its little entrenchment to obstruct the different stages of his course, in the high road to English greatness. But this their animosity had no reference whatever to his propositions, his arguments, or conclusions. They fell foul upon his literary pretensions and his motives, both of which their own qualities of head and heart had fitted them, no doubt, to appreciate: his reasoning alone escaped them; that is to say, the only thing which it imported them to consider, and which they were authorised to question or impeach.

1st. The loudest complaint against the former parts of these Letters was against their *personal* attacks on Ministers.

2d. The sin of the Author throughout the last year is, that he has dropped his personality altogether. Volumes of anonymous friendship have rolled in upon him: some tax him with being "bought off" by the Treasury; others charge him with great injustice and hardness of heart, for not pleading the cause of America against England; a third of these sages thinks proper to ask, why VERUS does not scold as unrelentingly as Tom Paine or Junius? a fourth, why he does not revile those barbarians, "the Judges" of the land, for the cruel laws which they are so ready to enforce against His Majesty's innocent subjects; a fifth favours us with a draught of a Letter to the P. R. which, he declares, if nicely cooked up by VERUS, will produce an immediate change of Ministry.

It might be enough for the Author to assure these disinterested counsellors, that he has all along had something more in view than the amusement of idleness, or the gratification of malice; that the end of Paine was to dissolve society; of Junius to inflict torture; and that no good man would take the powers of either with his principles. But to explain more perfectly the designs of VERUS, he will add a few words to what he has elsewhere professed, with regard to the introduction of sundry persons into a work, whose chief (and, he trusts, whose obvious)

purpose was the support of certain political principles, and of a corresponding class of measures, useful and honourable to the nation.

The period at which he began to write was that at which the Restricted Regency expired. His Royal Highness the Prince Regent had employed the first moments of freedom in a way which proved him worthy of it; by a frank solicitation to some of his ablest subjects to aid him in administering the affairs of England, at a crisis of unexampled danger to her and to Europe. The effort failed. The old Cabinet, enfeebled by the recent secession of Lord Wellesley, and hopeless (possibly not desirous) of drawing strength from the leaders of opposition, were announced once more as a formal government, on whose duration or competency, however, few people reckoned; and VETUS acknowledges that he was not of those few.

Great deeds were to be accomplished, or disasters dreaded in the Peninsula. Great events were approaching in the North of Europe. Serious evils menaced us from America. Agitation and dissension were afloat in Ireland. Success in Spain might produce such moral influence, and even so much of actual military power (and it was so represented at the time) as would enable Russia to protect herself, and Germany to escape from bondage. The total

failure of Lord Wellington would make these expectations desperate, and add to the mass of negative misfortune, by filling us with anxiety for our fate at home.

Was this a crisis at which any honest heart could be unmoved? The Author's, undoubtedly, was not so; nor was it a slight sense of duty which impelled him to communicate to others his opinions, hopes, and alarms. Good sources of intelligence had been open to him for many years, and in various quarters. His means of observation were rendered available by habits of study and close attention to political facts and vicissitudes; by early use, by frequent leisure, by reflection almost involuntary, above all, by the absence of personal interest, and the ignorance of party feeling. He has been accused as a writer of high pretension. He pretends to nothing. All his advantages and merits are recited above. If his advantages have been rare, they were purely accidental. His merits are those of most English gentlemen—zeal and reverence for his country.

For this protestation the Author has now little doubt of gaining credit, namely, that he entertained no shade of enmity towards any one member of the Government; that he beheld the Opposition with equal charity; and that of Marquis Wellesley his knowledge was as slight as any civilised being of the

present age, or of the remotest region can possess, since it was confined to *his public services*.

But the indifference of the Author towards these personages, for their own sakes, was rendered fruitless by the relations in which they severally stood, to the great questions whereon depended the safety and prosperity of the empire. The matter was how to ensure the execution of certain vigorous measures, necessary to the production of lasting and decisive results: the next point was how to obstruct the formation, or to effect the demolition of any government, not apparently qualified to answer these purposes; and to point the public esteem and confidence to those statesmen, if any such could be found, who had proved their fitness for times of extreme emergency, by the combination of extensive views with daring, skilful, and successful action. This constitutes the entire guilt of VERUS.

The Opposition, as a body, favoured the claims of the Catholics, and would probably have forced those claims through Parliament. This merit, (and it is needless to say that VERUS considered it as one of high importance,) was unfortunately superseded by their pertinacious refusal to co-operate with vigour in the Spanish cause. They have, it is true, retracted their former sentiments, in consideration of the triumphant progress of Lord Wellington; but

had that party come, two years ago, into power, is it unfair to conclude from their own arguments, that Spain must have been enrolled, ere now, amongst the conquered provinces of Buonaparte?

The avowed principles of Mr. Percival's administration were friendly to the hopes of the Spaniards. It is not here desirable to re-examine minutely the subjects of old disquisition, nor to dwell invidiously on the evidence to which we long since resorted, in justification of the Author's unfeigned belief, that the principles avowed ran the risk of being practically abandoned; that the minds of Ministers were more engaged by the difficulty, than by the necessity of great exertions; and that means, however inadequate to the final end, were not employed with diligence proportionate to each successive occasion.

The Author feels no reluctance to admit that the war with America might not have been averted by any exercise of strength or wisdom on the part of the British Government. But if not admonished or deterred by a display of our force, America might have been severely punished for provoking it. The scanty means of defence allowed to Canada—the neglect of the Lakes—the losses incurred by the merchant—the defeats and humiliation of our glorious navy—joined to a remembrance of the base

and despicable enemy by whom such evils were inflicted, raised throughout the empire one universal burst of grief, anger, and resentment. These painful sentiments were deeply shared, and strongly expressed by VERUS. Nor have the early disasters of the war been yet retorted on America. Though in its latter stages, the blame attributable to government has been considerably lightened, if not effaced, in as much as they have furnished a profuse and powerful squadron, far more than sufficient, with due exertion, to fulfil every vindictive as well as defensive purpose. The bitter complaints of Sir George Prevost will extract, it is to be hoped, from the British Admiral, some explanation of the causes which led to our destruction on Lake Erie, as the perpetual remonstrances of the mercantile interest ought to satisfy us, why the protection extended to trade has not been equal to the prodigious means and unlimited authority left at the disposal of our commanders. In these points, there is reason to believe, that little blame attaches to the government here.

But America, it was evident, must follow the fate of Europe; and the public feelings were detached from that distant and subordinate scene, by the magnitude and urgency of more immediate objects.

The battle of Salamanca, the retreat from Burgos,

and the subsequent sufferings and disorders of our army, had left on the minds of the people a crowd of mixed sensations. We were told that every possible effort had been employed to strengthen the hands of the English General. Yet the result had been the evacuation of the whole of Spain, after entering the capital on the heels of a splendid victory. Nor was the mischief confined to Spain. By the retreat of Lord Wellington, Buonaparte had been enabled to withdraw from his different corps in the Peninsula such a portion of officers and veteran troops,* as served for the frame of that army of conscripts, with which he won the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen—successes, which, if discreetly used, might have left Holland at his mercy, the Iron Crown upon his head,† and wiped away

* Not less than 60,000.

† Vide Austrian declaration; whence it appears, that a Continental peace was considered by the Court of Vienna, as the natural *step towards* a maritime peace; and that Austria laboured to accomplish that Continental peace without the least regard or allusion to England. It is proved by other documents, that the only conditions demanded by Austria were the restoration of the Illyrian provinces; (as being necessary to her intercourse with the Adriatic;) the extinction of the *French* Dutchy of Warsaw; the actual freedom of the Hanse Towns; and the nominal surrender of the supremacy of Napoleon over the confederates of the Rhine. Thus might he have retained in August last, the whole of Holland, of Flanders, of his feudal Kingdom of Westphalia, of his Danish influence, and his

from his remembrance every real subject of regret, but the loss of lives and of military reputation entailed upon him by his Russian enterprise.

The spring of 1813 was passed by Lord Wellington in silent preparation, but by the English people in great anxiety and doubt, how far he would be enabled by Ministers, who rather exaggerated than disguised the difficulties of the war, to advance

Italian Monarchy. More than all, he might have renewed the battle in pain, which Austria had the wisdom to exclude from her list of stipulations. The truth is, that both reason and fortune seemed to desert him, the moment other powers began to rely upon themselves. How forcibly do the occurrences of this last campaign recall the description of his character given by a great statesman in the House of Lords, and now translated and *quoted in every language* on the Continent: "I recollect to have observed even then," says Lord Wellesley, "that independently of its strong hostility to every Christian and moral principle, the assassination of Buonaparte might be among the most impolitic things that could be done; that as he was probably the only man in the world who could have raised his power to such a height, so he was probably the only man who could bring it into such imminent danger. His eagerness for power was so inordinate, his jealousy of independence so fierce, his keenness of appetite so feverish in all that touched his ambition, even in the most trifling things, *that he must plunge into desperate difficulties.* He was of an order of minds that by nature make for themselves great reverses," &c. This speech was spoken last March. It is, as I said before, quoted and dwelt upon by thousands of intelligent persons upon the Continent, where, it is a well known truth, that the debates of the British Senate are more closely watched, and the characters of our public men more deeply studied, than by many of the most flippant politicians in this metropolis.

once more, with boldness and effect, and to decide the fate of the Peninsula.

This question was settled at Vittoria. The victory of Lord Wellington on that auspicious day, if not so hardly or so dearly won, as others which have made his name immortal, ranks among the most splendid of the age. Its apparent facility was part of its beauty. It is true indeed, that the forces drafted to the North of Europe had reduced the total of the French army in the Peninsula; but what remained was more concentrated, and had approached much nearer to the seat of its resources. The scale of operations, and its noble fruits, were satisfactory evidence that Ministers had not been idle, and that if not yet perfect in the detailed administration of their means, they had adopted such broad views and principles of warfare, as would suffice for the redemption of many errors which had been imputed to them, and for a pledge that our future confidence in their activity would not be unworthily placed. The opening of the campaign of 1813, was the *second* great crisis in the war for Spanish liberty.

The favourable sentiments inspired by this event towards Ministers were no sooner felt than acknowledged by Verus; led by the same sense of duty and independence, his approbation of their conduct was now as warm, as his preceding animadversions

had been free, strong, and unqualified. But from the moment when his hostility to the cabinet ceased, with the political grounds on which alone it had rested; he prepared for the enmity of another class of politicians—namely, certain potentates of the Anglo-Gallican press, who, still enjoying the protectorship of the great Napoleon, have survived their brethren, the Confederates of the Rhine, in obedience and attachment to their master.

The subsequent assistance furnished by Ministers to Lord Wellington, still imperfect in many of its details—pecuniary, military, and naval—has nevertheless been unrelaxed in that zeal and spirit, from which all practical improvements must be expected to flow, and indeed without which they must ever be vain and fruitless.

Nor have these adoptions of manly principle been exhibited only in Spain. The British Government seem to have applied the same vigorous policy, which has rescued the Peninsula from destruction, as a precedent whence they might borrow a system, of defence and liberation for the North of Europe.

Had the hopes of those who agree in sentiment with the Author been realized in all their parts, it is possible that the Hero of Spain and Portugal might have so much earlier completed his work in the South, as to have long ago transferred his services to another

scene of glory, and to have executed, in the name of England herself, those duties which she has since assigned to a Foreign Representative. The successes of Bernadotte are at present those of an Ally. The successes of Lord Wellington on the same stage would have been *lasting* honour, influence, and power to Great Britain. It by no means follows however, that because the military efforts of this country would have been desirable, and for good reasons, in the North of Germany, we might therefore dispense with the services of Sweden, or let one brave nation lie waste and unprofitable, while the seeds of freedom and public happiness were profusely scattered throughout the rest of the world. Whether England were to act in person or not, it was most wise to secure the co-operation of the Swedes, and where that co-operation could only be obtained by purchase—the next question to consider was the price.

The treaty with Sweden is a feature of great importance in the political transactions of the year now elapsed. The objects of England and Sweden respectively (for Russia had but a minor interest, though in some measure concurrent with that of the other parties) were of extreme concern to both powers. That of Sweden, under the name of an indemnity for the loss of Finland, was really a scheme of durable influence and aggrandisement. Great Britain had a

double purpose to answer ; to gain the exertions of an immediate ally, and the favourable dispositions of a future friend.

To a Swedish subsidy for a prompt and specific service, there is less objection than to any other subsidy, or to one granted for any distant or general consideration. Sweden, though not over-run and ruined by Buonaparte, as was the case with Prussia and other German States, had been so exhausted by the contest for Finland, and so impoverished by the loss of that valuable province, that she had scarcely funds to keep her civil Government together, and was utterly destitute of any means to pay or move a military force. The money granted by the British Parliament was more than adequate to the subsidiary force employed.

Had England no interest with regard to Sweden, beyond the acquisition of an army of auxiliaries for the actual exigence of the war, the other stipulations of this very interesting and important treaty would appear gratuitous and indefensible.

But if we reflect upon the history of Sweden during nearly the whole of the eighteenth century, that is, since the death of Charles XII., we shall find that her politics were the inevitable result of her weakness, which filled her with a perpetual fear of Russia, and threw her for protection into the arms of France, The

geographical position of Finland, or rather its military station at the very gates of St. Petersburg, must have proved an endless source of jealousy between that Court and the government of Sweden. In one sense, therefore, its absolute conquest by Alexander may be considered as a termination of the most pregnant subject of dispute. But this cruel reduction of the native strength of Sweden was in other respects an evil of extreme magnitude. France, whose alliance had formerly contributed to support them against the ascendancy of their formidable neighbour, was incapable of repairing the loss which her crooked policy* had entailed upon the Swedes; but through the medium of her authority at the Danish Court, she could henceforth exercise a dreadful tyranny over her ancient ally. The acquisition of Finland having relieved the Russians from all uneasiness at any future efforts on the part of Sweden, the Court of St. Petersburg would look with perfect apathy at the sufferings or oppressions inflicted on that kingdom by France and Denmark united. It thence became the direct policy of England, to withdraw the Swedish nation, if possible, from the grasp of French dominion; and to obtain for them such an

* The conquest of Finland was undertaken by Russia at the express instigation of Buonaparte.

accession of inward strength, as would qualify them to protect their own independence, and to pursue their commercial and national prosperity undisturbed.

On this ground rests the wisdom of investing Sweden with the Sovereignty of Norway, which will render the whole Scandinavian Peninsula impregnable to every invader, and prone to a friendly intercourse with Great Britain, as well by her wants as her redundancies. How the justice and moral rectitude of such a proceeding came to be debated in the *English* Parliament, it is not very easy to conceive. The morality of Sweden is in the guardianship of Sweden. But surely this nation, at war with Denmark, is competent to the execution of every hostile act—and to a participation with every power which accepts our friendship, in attacking by open force a State, which under the shelter of profound peace, conspired our ruin as a people.

If nevertheless it were necessary that Sweden should enjoy her independence, it is by no means desirable that she should command a preponderance in the North. She has always been an ambitious power. The possession of Norway will make her intrinsically stronger than at any former period. The spirit of ambitious enterprise will return with the consciousness of her strength—and the natural security of her own dominions will exempt her from

the fear of retaliation. Norway must augment her maritime resources, and give her a line of posts and harbours, menacing in no small degree both the entrance to the Baltic and the liberty of the German Ocean. In acceding therefore to this aggrandisement of Sweden, it is essential that we should provide against its possible abuse. The conquest of Zealand would make Sweden absolute in the North of Europe. Are we prepared to assert that under circumstances so much more promising she will never again repeat those attempts which have before succeeded? Is it so clear that another Swedish conqueror will demean himself with the moderation of Charles XII.; or that "the English parricides * and Dutch pedlars" will prevail upon another Charles X. to raise the siege of Copenhagen?

To what fatal uses the possession of Zealand might be converted by the Court of Stockholm it is perfectly needless to explain—or to what a defenceless and enslaved condition it would bring the most essential branches of our commerce. Against such a prospect there is but one security—the annexation of that island to the British crown.

England holding the fine post of Malta, and being

* The passionate expression of that monarch when called upon by Algernon Sidney, ambassador from the Parliament in 1659, to withdraw his troops from before the Danish capital.

to every warlike purpose the virtual Sovereign of Sicily, has nothing to fear within the waters of the Mediterranean. What she wants is a great naval station in the North. She wants it as a direct impediment to invasion. But it would be of inestimable value in another point of view; for it would go farther to settle the maritime law of Europe, than the permanent acquisition of Holland itself—or than the eloquence and finesse of all the plenipotentiaries in the world.

We may probably regard it as an undoubted truth, that what is called the Continental System, can never be revived in any civilised country, except by mere violence. To be secure, therefore, against the return of the Continental System, it is enough that we need entertain no immediate apprehension of the re-conquest of Europe by this or any second Buonaparte.

But there is a rational and just alarm, the grounds of which can never be removed, until the maritime rights of England shall be recognised by an authentic and solemn act of all the first rate powers; and *guaranteed* by placing in the hands of England the means of enforcing the rights so acknowledged. Whenever this country is at war with France, or indeed with any other, it becomes the present interest of every neutral state to maintain the prin-

ciples of the "*Armed Neutrality*," as much as to resist those of "the Continental System." That free bottoms make free goods, is a popular doctrine every where but in England; that is to say, it is a doctrine immediately advantageous to all neutral countries, which desire to carry for the nations at war—and still more advantageous to those belligerent nations, which are weaker by sea than their enemies. We must not be content with our own assurance that the establishment of such a principle, by ruining our marine, would finally overturn the best guardian of Europe. It is not amongst each other we have to argue this fair proposition, nor would it be of much real value to convince each individual statesman on the Continent of its truth. It would be, perhaps it is already noted down, as a just but *speculative* maxim—like an article of faith to be always confessed—and violated. What may safely be insisted on is, that nations in the mass, through mere folly, make good the charge of ancient superstition against wicked men, by selling their immortality for lucre. Commercial states, above all others, are governed by present motives, to the exclusion of distant reasonings—and every consideration of temporary profit must engage the greater portion of the European commonwealth to favour this theory so destructive to the elements of our marine. The

“armed Neutrality,”* if not of Baltic origin, derived at least its mischievous force and influence from its adoption by the Northern Courts. Denmark has been a uniform and inveterate member of each league which had this for its principle or pretext, and the importance attached to her position and resources, as means for effecting the end, proves how far their acquisition by this country might become an instrument towards defeating it, if resumed or meditated hereafter.

But if political reasons, strengthened by the annexation of Norway to the Swede, were conclusive as to the necessity for our acquiring Zealand, how much more urgent and imperious does this necessity become, when by the gift of Guadaloupe we add riches to dominion—and enable Sweden not only to supply her own demands for colonial produce, but to contend with us for the favour of our other customers in the Baltic, hitherto paid for much of their corn and naval stores by the growth of the British West Indies?

To the unfounded argument that this cession is condemned by the law of nations, we owe but little reverence. France broke the old maxim of the law of nations, and established this right of property,

* The Spanish minister, Florida Blanca, boasts of having proposed it to the Empress Catherine.

pendente lite, as a precedent *against herself*. It is not therefore from the injurious consequences of this treaty to the “fair pretensions” of the common enemy, that an English statesman ought to qualify the support he gives it—but rather because the aggrandisement of our ally should be restrained and guarded by certain provisions, of which few traces are to be found in the negotiation or in the compact; and which, without impairing the rights or interests of Sweden, need not have placed those of England at her disposal.

There is assuredly no desire on the part of the author to derogate from the splendid services of the Prince Royal, or to depreciate those of the other allied powers, in this unparalleled campaign; But neither ought the services of England to be forgotten by the Allies. The battle has been fought with British means. The question of subsidy is a mixed question of economy and discretion—whether we get the same value for the money bestowed on foreign states, as if we reserved it for the increase of our own armies, and for the execution of our own enterprises—whether also admitting the quantum of military success to be the same, it may not be finally employed against ourselves, by nations whom we have fed and restored to vigour, perversely thwarting, and basely sacrificing, their benefactors.

If Austria be not alive to the rescue of the whole of Italy from Buonaparte, she deserts, not England, but her own safety—no English gold will rouse her to adequate exertion, nor bind her to perseverance or good faith. If reason had its due operation at Vienna, that Court would be anxious beyond all others to reduce even to extremity the greatness of the French empire, and to grant no peace that would leave it the faculty of being mischievous. But two rather inconsistent rumours are circulated respecting Austria. First, that she has disclaimed any reluctance to a restoration of the Bourbons. Secondly, that she is more inclined than the other confederates, to peace on easy terms with Buonaparte. The latter of these is the more probable account—and for this reason, (perhaps not generally thought of,) that she at present fears Russia, *more than* France. A subsidy furnished to such a power appears at open war with economy, as well as with political discretion.

Apart from the natural desire of vengeance, the Russian Emperor is moved by the strongest impulse of sound and accurate policy, to follow up the expulsion of the French from his own borders, by re-establishing every nation from the Vistula to the Rhine. The health and independence of the Prussian monarchy are vital objects with Alexander. Prussia will be his immediate barrier against the aggressions

of France; and it does not belong to her geographical position to check or embarrass his views upon the Ottoman empire. Hence we have a right to put sufficient confidence in the zeal of Russia for the absolute liberation of the Germans; we are justified in believing that so far as her resources extend, they will be honestly employed for a purpose of such moment to her own lasting welfare—and our solicitude may then confine itself to the single question whether Russia, without a supply of money from England, could have any means of assisting the cause of German independence? It is clear, that she could not. The patriotism of her inhabitants, and the uncontrolled authority of a popular and absolute monarch, might effectually repulse an invader from the Russian territory; but these alone, without farther aid, could hardly undertake the burthen of a distant warfare. Comparing then the subsidy afforded,* with the number and quality of the troops engaged for—with the magnitude of the object in relation to the interests of this country—and with

* For 160,000 Russian troops, we pay about £1,360,000—for 80,000 Prussian £633,000, besides engaging for two and a half millions of federal paper at the peace—half the number of men in British pay, and raised by Great Britain, would cost double the sum. The Author was most agreeably disappointed by the terms and stipulations of this treaty—but that with Sweden was not so carefully negotiated.

the strong security we have for the honour of Russia, in the value of that same object to herself, the bargain, it must be admitted on all hands, is one of unprecedented advantage to Great Britain.

The sufferings brought upon a military power by cowardice, selfishness, perfidy, and degeneracy, present little claim to compassion or relief, until accompanied by symptoms of returning virtue. Prussia has been that power. The abandoned policy which induced her for so long a period to desert the cause of all civilised nations, that she might prey on the carcase of European liberty, and share with the Common Destroyer a portion of the general spoil, was crowned by the baseness with which she yielded to the slavery she had helped to impose. Had a national spirit then existed in Prussia, the battle of Jena would not have been lost, for the troops would have imbibed the spirit of their countrymen. Had the day been unfortunate and not disgraceful—had it been lost through the absence, not of valour, but of skill alone, the conquerors would have been ruined by their own succeeding rashness, and the errors of the Government been retrieved by the people. Had these conquerors again been satisfied with dealing out to their victim the ordinary measure of insolence, intemperance, and oppression, their triumph over the unhappy Frederick might have

proved no less permanent than complete. But without the least allusion to the character or concerns of the House of Bourbon, it may be truly said, that the violences of Buonaparte are not those of "a Prince" or "a gentleman." It is not enough that he fetters the authority of a defeated Sovereign within his own dominions—or that he outrages the nominal freedom which he boasts of tendering to the conquered—or converts the public resources of their monarchy to his own designs—or injures and insults a state collectively—the genius of his tyranny is to make war full as much upon the domestic happiness, as on the political greatness of a nation. The pillage, cruelty, and bitter contempt, with which every father of a family, every possessor of property, and indeed every man, in proportion to the excellence of his character and reputation in society, was treated, throughout the course of the Russian contest, by the ministers of this foreign despotism, produced effects on the people of Prussia, which no degradation or disaster that befell their Government only, could ever have brought home to their feelings. The suffering was *personal* from the King to the lowest of his subjects—so likewise was the passion for revenge. A great community so excited—so committed—so panting for independence—but so reduced to

utter indigence and nakedness, by the very provocations which at length roused her to resist—must appear to all men a proper object of the aid and liberality of Great Britain. The case is even stronger than that of Russia, whose immediate safety had been accomplished, while the Prussian monarchy was yet at issue. But the argument in favour of the treaty with Prussia is still more forcible, when we consider that she has a *common interest* with this country in the liberation of Hanover and Holland. It is probably much more essential to the peace of the Prussian monarchy, than to that of England, that the successes of the allied arms should be carried to the full release of these provinces, because, if while they are occupied or ruled by France, they expose the flank of the British Empire to an attack by sea, they also lay open the heart of Prussia to an invasion by French armies, as much more terrible, as the military force of that kingdom, compared with France, is inferior to the maritime force of England. Of the zeal and energy therefore of their military operations, we need have little suspicion with regard to Frederick or Alexander—nor in looking at the details of the subsidiary treaties, does it seem likely that we could have purchased such powerful assistance at a much more equitable price.

But we are authorised to infer from the language of Ministers, when they announced these conventions to Parliament, that the terms on which peace would be admissible were taken into view, at the same time with the means of rendering war successful. This at the present hour is a topic of supreme importance and urgency. It is to be hoped that the minds of the British negotiators were not merely engaged in discussing those conditions for the general benefit of Europe, whose secondary operation might be advantageous to this country—but that they felt themselves bound to insist on certain points of original and *special* value to Great Britain, and though favourable in the highest degree, yet indirectly favourable, to Europe at large, through the medium of English strength and affluence. One of these, we have said before, should be a *solemn recognition* of those rights and principles of maritime law, which are of prime necessity to the existence of the empire. There are statesmen who object to the demand of any such recognition, or indeed to the stirring of the question at all—seeing that the law is “already settled,” and that to re-open the subject would be to weaken our case. At this rate all declaratory laws are superfluous—nay, injurious. At this rate our ancestors were short-sighted and imprudent, for exacting such numberless confir-

mations of Magna Charta, from the reign of John to that of Edward the Third. But then we are told, the provisions of that noble instrument were frequently violated, and called for the repeated sanctions of King and Parliament.—And have these principles of public law for which we contend, been so regularly admitted by powers hostile to England? or acquiesced in by neutrals, whose very name ought to constitute them guardians of the law of nations? Have they so held sacred this established code, as to leave us quite at ease respecting its future prevalence and authority? What reduced England to a situation so deplorable towards the conclusion of the war of 1775? What has been the maritime pretension set up by France, and neither opposed, nor complained of, by the States of Europe, during the present struggle? Why do we still carry on the war with America—but because there is a stubborn desire implanted in that government to upset the doctrine whose practical stability and universality are thus with seeming candour confessed, *pro hac vice*—in the hope that its recognition may be waved or prevented? The perpetual attempts made to obtrude upon us this two-fold heresy—that we are neither to know French goods nor English seamen, under the masquerade habit of a neutral flag, prove that we must stop the imposition in time, or that the old

creed will shortly be voted obsolete. The best occasion on which to press the expediency of such an avowal from our Northern friends was before the subsidies were granted—if it were then forgotten, it was an oversight in addition to, and only inferior to, that of Zealand itself.

There is a second article of the utmost magnitude to this country. We ought to have obtained, I trust we have obtained, a pledge from our Allies, that if the events of war became propitious, the *naval arsenal* of Antwerp should be destroyed. If such an event could be brought about by military operation, so much the better—it would then be enough to stipulate, that if restored to the enemy, its works should never be re-established. Should we fail to capture this fortress, the immediate annihilation of all its maritime means and equipments ought to be made the *sine quâ non* of a treaty. We need not envy nor obstruct the peaceful commerce of Antwerp. But as a naval depôt, it exists for no other conceivable use, than the direct invasion of the British Islands. We owe to that labour of the wizard-hand of Buonaparte, no small weight of retribution. The uneasiness flowing from its proximity to our coast—the wear and tear and vast expense of shipping—the treasure, character, and

lives of Walcheren!—these are some of our solid obligations to the new and more terrible Algiers.

For their steady concurrence in the support of these two objects—the maritime law of England, and her safety from invasion—it would be wise to have offered our Confederates a liberal recompense. But if they have not been already valued and agreed upon, the misfortune is, that we shall be charged a double price for each.

The liberation of Holland, it is presumed, must have been long contemplated by the Allied Sovereigns as a possible, and most desirable, effect of their alliance. But Holland, if eventually rescued from the French yoke, must derive the faculty of maintaining her independence, from cessions made by France or by England. Were it not a dream too flattering to be realized, we might speculate on a general disposition amongst the Allied Powers to annex the whole of the Netherlands, with some little addition towards the Rhine, to the Sovereignty of the House of Orange.—This, by restoring the ancient frontier from Gravelines to Luxemburgh—and extending it by Deuxponts to the Rhine—would form an efficient barrier against French encroachment in the north of Germany—while the skill and enterprise of the industrious inhabitants would fur-

nish inexhaustible moral resources, and complete the picture of a prosperous and happy kingdom. Of so grand a foundation for a balance of power in Europe, of so fair a triumph to the cause of public peace and liberty, it would perhaps be too soon to despair; but it is one of which the Author cannot deceive himself or others, by professing to feel at this moment any sanguine expectation. There are yet no facts to justify the belief that the French garrisons throughout Flanders, or within the territory of Old France, will desert the colours of Buonaparte. There has no evidence reached us, to induce even a suspicion, that the people of France will rise against their tyrant: and on the contingency of private assassination, it would be mean, and wicked, if it were not rash and puerile, to reason.

The Allied Armies have entered France.—It is not long since we lent (almost universally) a willing ear to the fond prediction, that a foreign corps appearing on the frontier would be a signal for the people of Paris, to end at one blow the calamities of mankind.—The people of Paris, so far as we yet can learn, are occupied with the care of defending Paris from the invaders.

It is not three weeks since we received intelligence, that commissioners, invested with absolute

authority, were dispatched to the several departments. In an invaded country, it is conformable to reason and experience, that the arm of the Government should be every where strong—to ensure in all quarters a prompt and strict execution of the orders given. Who could wish, if England were invaded, to impose any fetters on the Supreme authority? What is the new delegation of power in France, but a union in the persons of great public officers, of the highest civil and military functions, adapted to a crisis of undisguised and extraordinary danger? On this measure likewise the English have argued, as they ever used to do—inferring only the weakness and embarrassment of Buonaparte, *instead* of the vigour and energy of his political resolution.

The language moreover of the French Emperor has been here a topic of exultation and contempt. He has addressed it seems the passions of his subjects—crying aloud for their active services—and dwelling on the miseries of submission to a foreign yoke. And what sovereign, in the name of wonder, who has a nation to hear him, would fail to call forth their public spirit against an enemy posted on the frontier—*unless he feared to place arms in their hands?* That such is not the case with Buonaparte we need hardly take the trouble to demonstrate.

So little jealousy has he shown of the national feeling, that he implores and conjures them by every motive of interest and honour, to assemble themselves in all directions, and to defend, with his empire, their families and homes. If a spirit adverse to his person prevailed in France, would he thus have thrown himself on its mercy?

We are taught to expect, that within a short period the Bourbon Princes will hoist the standard of their House. This is a measure of which none can foresee the consequences, in our total ignorance of those facts by which they may have been encouraged to undertake it. But if the sentiment in their favour be not that of a large majority of the nation, there is little prospect that it will be acted on at all; since they who distrust their own strength will scarcely brave the vengeance of Napoleon, or rest their safety on the promises of foreign Courts. Without asserting that such a revolution is chimerical, we may at least remark, that no approach or tendency to it can be assumed, from any circumstances which have yet transpired.

We hear that the Cossacks have overspread the country, and are to precede the grand armies in their march. The Cossack is an admirable soldier, but he is an unrelenting and incorrigible plunderer. The Cossack burns with vengeance against the

whole French nation—a natural, pardonable, or even laudable vengeance—but the merit of that feeling is perfectly distinct from the wisdom of suffering him to indulge it. Whether the avowed resentments of the Russian and Prussian soldiers qualify them to be the best of peace-makers—to conciliate the people of France—or to unite them with their rulers—is a political question, which the Author has no wish to decide.

It is a disputed point, whether time has been lost by Prince Schwartzemberg—or by the Prince Royal, in pursuing Swedish objects into Jutland, instead of masking the forces of Davoust, and moving down the bulk of his great army to Antwerp. But it is clear enough that time has been gained by Buonaparte.—His preparations, it is credibly stated, are on a large scale, and in rapid progress. His prodigious mass of fortification on the side of Flanders is yet untouched—and should the troops prove staunch, it will remain so. The nation begins to breathe. An immense draught from the grand army of the Confederates must be left in observation of the several fortresses, and in reserve upon the Rhine. With the remnant we advance—to Paris. We may advance, in spite of every obstacle—and enter the French capital in triumph.—We *may* be defeated—and what a defeat would it

be—in the centre of France? And what would be its inevitable consequences? Who is bold enough to contemplate them, or able to describe them?

It might have been an ungracious and impolitic proceeding to check the ardour of the people of Holland, by withholding the aid of British troops. Nor is it the fault of our Administration, if those of Bernadotte were engrossed by a less important service. Let us trust that Lord Wellington has no cause to regret this large and sudden diversion of an efficient force to an unhealthy climate.

Upon the whole, it is by no means the inclination of the Author to throw a damp over the joyous sensations of the Public, at seeing France change places with those whom she has persecuted. But sufficient insight has been afforded into his opinions, to account for his wishing that peace had been concluded, *before* the Allies entered France—sufficient possibly to explain his solicitude, that it may be signed before they advance *much farther*.

England has the means of purchasing, by colonial cessions, the strenuous support of the other European powers, in her demand of a secure and honourable peace. But it can hardly be too often repeated, that these cessions must be in favour of

Allies—not of Enemies. The maritime rights and safeguards which it becomes us to enforce, are then worth the sacrifice of many maritime conquests.

“ The Roman Senate,” says Montesquieu, “ at the close of every war, determined the punishments and rewards which the respective powers had merited. It took away from the conquered enemy a part of their dominions, *to bestow upon the allies* of the Republic; by which it accomplished two purposes; it attached to Rome those Sovereigns from whom she had little to fear, and much to hope; while at the same time she weakened others, from whom she had no ground for hope, and a great deal for apprehension.”*

Those who love peace, not for the name alone, but for the invaluable blessings of security and confidence, without which it is a deceitful shadow, will hear with anxiety, amounting to agony, the communications of Lord Castlereagh on the 1st

* “ A la fin de chaque guerre, il (le Sénat) décidoit des peines et des récompenses que chacun avoit méritée. Il ôtoit une partie du domaine du peuple vaincu, *pour la donner aux alliés*: en quoi il faisoit deux choses; il attàchoit à Rome des Rois dont elle avoit peu à craindre, et beaucoup à espérer; et il en affoiblissoit d’autres, dont elle n’avoit rien à esperer, et tout à craindre.” *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, Chap. 6.*

March. It would be unjust to Ministers, and might be fatal to our own happiness, to raise the public assurance too high, as to the full success of his Lordship's mission.* There is reason to believe

* The departure of Lord Castlereagh for the head-quarters of the Allies, though possibly a judicious measure, is a very singular circumstance in modern times—our ancestors attached no mean importance to the reputation and ability of those Statesmen to whom negotiations affecting the general state of Europe were committed.

Parliament, in the year 1709, recommended to Her Majesty that no less a personage than the Duke of Marlborough, who besides his other qualities was by far the ablest negotiator of his day, should be sent to Holland to counteract the intrigues of France.

Part of the address stands as follows—and the parallel between the two periods is not a little striking.

Jovis 16 Die Februarii, 1709.

We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, having reason to believe that the negotiations for peace will suddenly be renewed in Holland, and being justly apprehensive of the crafty and insinuating designs of our enemies, to sow divisions among your Allies, or, by amusing them with deceitful expectations of peace, to retard their preparations for war; do think ourselves bound in duty most humbly to represent to your Majesty, of how great importance we conceive it is to the interest of the common cause, that the Duke of Marlborough should be abroad at this critical juncture.

* * * * *

We therefore make it our humble request to your Majesty, that

that the obstructions and embarrassments which await him, will not proceed entirely from Buona-parte. There are still much stronger reasons to be satisfied, from the published sentiments of the present Cabinet, that if they fail in accommodating the various interests of Europe, it will not be owing to the absence of moderation or humility in the terms required by Great Britain.—That the country should support them in the maintenance of her lawful claims is no more than the King's Servants have a right to demand from the gallant spirit of Englishmen: to protect them under the unmerited disappointment of those claims, is a duty which every honest man will perform with readiness—but for which, to perform it effectually, a wise man will not be unprepared.

If the motives of the Author had not been sedulously assailed, and misrepresented by all the party-writers of the day, he might now consider the recurrence to these motives a task much worse than

you would be pleased to order the Duke of Marlborough's immediate departure for Holland, where his presence will be equally necessary to assist at the negotiations for peace, and to hasten the preparations for an early campaign, which will most effectually disappoint the artifices of our enemies, and procure a safe and honourable peace for your Majesty and your Allies.

superfluous. All parties have disclaimed him; and so far as their pitiful malice could carry them, they have laboured to undermine the reputation of VETUS, because England has ever been his object, and the friends of England his only friends.

His consistency and purity have been often derided, because he commenced by a daring assault upon administration, and has lately appeared as their supporter. This is a flight beyond the "mousing" "owls" of party. VETUS was a foe to Ministers, because he disliked their doubtful principles, and the entire system of their war measures. When they adopted better principles, and began to execute steadily more vigorous measures, was he to sacrifice his own views of national policy, to a base and profligate thirst after personality? As the censures cast by the Author upon Ministers were strictly incidental to the principles which he avowed, his applause and admiration of others were incidental also. Party had no sympathy with his declared attachment to a Statesman illustrious by unexampled services, and endeared still more to men of honour and feeling, by the horrid calumnies and persecutions with which those services were requited. Party could not tolerate what it could never feel, an unbought reverence for exalted talent. The ministerial papers,

not unnaturally it is confessed, abused the writer who ridiculed their measures. The opposite faction bore with his preference of Lord Wellesley, *so long as* he connected that attachment with an exposure of the policy pursued by Government; but instantly and most dutifully opened their little engines of detraction, when it was perceived that his objects were national, not personal; and that his enmity to the interests of France, survived his hostility to Ministers.

With regard at least to one splendid public character, the consistency of VERUS bids fair to be unimpeached, in the eye both of patriotism and of party.

To the Statesman who saved one empire by the acquisition of another; who finished, almost in the same hour as he commenced, a war on which the fate of India depended, by negotiating and concluding a *glorious peace*, the foundation of lasting happiness to 50,000,000 of men; to that war-minister and powerful negotiator, the mind of the Author turned with confidence, that England might repose in safety on his genius. While in office, while out of office, has Lord Wellesley given his advocates the semblance of a pretext, to repent of their praises, or to blush for their choice?

In what relates to his Majesty's Ministers, the

title to reproach them has long been weakened. They have recently endeavoured to act on bold and comprehensive principles; they have improved many fair opportunities. But no respect or forbearance towards any man shall restrain the just declaration—that where those opportunities were not the gifts of fortune, they have sprung from the very same bold and comprehensive principles, suggested by the noble Marquess, and by him alone; principles, to his honest zeal for which, he notoriously surrendered his station in the Government; principles, for whose sake he perpetuated in all likelihood his exclusion from power, by the vehemence with which he enforced them in Parliament; principles whose sobriety, solidity, and efficacy, were no sooner fairly tried by Ministers, than they changed as if by magic the whole course of the war, and with it the prospects of the world.

The Letters of VERUS have been lightly read, if it be necessary to retrace the views of this great Statesman, through Sicily, Spain, and the North of Europe.* The Sovereign knows the servant whom

* It appears to have been the opinion of Lord Wellesley, that the *continuity* of the Continental System might best be broken, by detaching *Sweden* from her connexion with France. Accordingly, while he was Foreign Secretary, the conduct of this country to the Swedes

he has lost, and now that the clouds both of jealousy and of mystery have blown away, the discretion of

was distinguished for *mildness* and *moderation*; in short, a return of kindness for reluctant hostility. This was by no means lost upon Sweden, and actually produced an extraordinary sensation of goodwill to Great Britain over the whole of the North of Europe, the frantic breast of the King of Denmark only excepted.

The next object of our policy was to open certain friendly communications with Bernadotte. The manner in which both these principles were carried into effect is strikingly marked in a long state paper, published by the Swedish government in the summer of 1812, from which the following extracts are taken: the name of Lord Wellesley is studiously, very unusually, and most honourably combined with the statement of these transactions by the Court of Sweden.

“If the English Government viewed with a tranquil eye the situation of Sweden, and did not consider her declaration of war as a sufficient motive for directing hostilities against Swedish commerce; if this tolerant system facilitated to a certain degree a vent for the immense stores of our native iron, and so far obviated the pernicious effects of the war; your Majesty still ought not to have expected that the French Government would have built its accusations against Sweden on the forbearance of England: your Majesty was, on the contrary, rather entitled to hope, that the French Emperor would see with satisfaction this kingdom treated with forbearance, by a power which had so many means of annoying Sweden.

“Your Majesty, convinced of the danger into which you had been drawn by the rapid march of events, judged, that it was time to come to an accommodation with the English Cabinet, and to open yourself to that of Russia, with a noble frankness. Your Majesty with pleasure saw the Marquess of Wellesley, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, disposed to receive your proposals, and impressed with the dangers, which, at that period, impended over Europe. Some time after,

Ministers, if not their candour, may prompt them to justify their former colleague.

you concluded at Orebro a treaty of peace with England, advantageous to both countries; and the relations of amity were drawn closer with Russia, by a new compact, the execution of which must place Sweden in security from all the commotions of Continental politics."

Minister, if another candidate may promptly be to
 justify their former collection.

LETTERS OF VETUS

...to be consistent with the type of holiness, or with
 my own feelings, and this is not altogether mine.
 A certain personal feeling, my information be
 (false), whose station is not upon the qualities
 through which he obtained it, the very becoming
 glare, has within these few days asserted, that "Vr-
 "tus was entirely devoted to the fire" the fire
 "directed against him by the spiritual press, had
 "been so spirited, happy, and successful, as to put
 "it out of the question, that he could rally—
 "that he had said to himself, 'I will not rally—
 "the Treasury had said, 'I will not rally—
 "Why, this is the only way to rally—
 let himself—where he has to rally—
 least a six "republican" rally—
 acted a truly wonderful number of rallies, and

...

...

...

IF I remember my former, I am less so than might
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THE
LETTERS OF VETUS.

LETTER XVII.

Virulent Attacks on Vetus.

SIR,

JANUARY 30, 1813.

IF I renew my demands upon you sooner than might be consistent with the rules of politeness, or with my own free choice, the fault is not altogether mine.

A certain personage (unless my information be false), whose station has thrown upon the qualities through which he obtained it, no very becoming glare, has within these few days asserted, that "VETUS was entirely beaten down,"—that "the fire directed against him by the Ministerial press, had been so spirited, happy, and successful, as to put it out of the question, that he could ever rally,—that he bade fair to be soon forgotten,—and that the Treasury had gained an undoubted triumph!"

Why, this outruns the sarcastic bitterness of Hamlet himself,—when he allots to a "great man," at least a six "months' memory." Here we find enacted a truly provident statute of limitation, under

which a six weeks' interruption of any work is equivalent to an extinction of its author. Really this will never do against those who wield, on their own behalf, the full benefit of "*nullum tempus*." But rather than risk the forlorn project of reviving an obsolete title, I prefer the support of a disputed one.

If the humbler virtues of gratitude and modesty were within the conditions, or amongst the qualifications of office, there would be even less question, I apprehend, than there now is, as to the fitness of noble persons for their posts. Because I generously waited a reply to those reasonings, which through your paper had been communicated to the ears of the Cabinet, and to the minds of the English nation,—because candour and common sense equally required, that the people should have time to reflect upon my facts, and Ministers to demonstrate their insignificance or their falsehood,—because the attack had been suspended, that the defence might be undisturbed,—patience appears to have been mistaken for impotence,—and the creditor's moderation for the illegality of his claim.

If this be a triumph to the heroes of Downing-street, I tell them fairly, they had better hasten to enjoy it. Willing, however, to escape the pollution of a contest with ribaldry, vulgarity, and instinctive slander, I leave to those journals, by which even a bad cause is degraded, the whole domain of St. Giles, in full and entire sovereignty. The Masters and Misses who spell and titter for the *Morning Post*, may, I promise them, so far as *Verus* is concerned,

be-decorate its Corinthian* columns with impunity, while, with the brawny diligence of Cyclops, the more grim-looking journeymen in the workshop of the *Courier*, fabricate brazen armour for "*the Gods*."†

* "*Corinthian*" is here adopted in its *moral*, rather than its architectural sense. The synonyme, "*meretricious*," might offend the grown ladies, and puzzle some few of the growing ones.

† Swift—or some wit of his day has advised—that no writer who values his character, (that is, I presume, no writer whatever,) should complain of any abuse he meets with—or indeed acknowledge that he has been abused at all.—Since the chances are ten to one against the existence of his adversaries being known to the world, unless he should have the courtesy to announce that they do exist. *Vetus* ought to apologise to himself for having been provoked—and to his readers for naming the creatures who provoked him, to write this present Letter. The curs were silenced by it for more than ten months.—They have at length, (December 1813,) begun to yelp a little—but with the addition of a *soi-disant* English watch-dog, that has turned out to be no better than a paltry French pug. The *Morning Chronicle* has come forth, (what I always feared it would,) a rank and devoted Tory. (Vide the mass of Tory papers and pamphlets on the campaigns of Marlborough and the expediency of peace.) After raving for many years against the folly of sending British troops to Spain or Portugal—after accusing this Government of mad presumption, for fancying that it was possible to cope with France on any part of the continent of Europe—after painting in mournful colours the ruin which awaited our ill-starred Commander (that "*losing chess player*!") in the Peninsula—and deploring with tears of crocodile sensibility the fate to which their wisdom had predestined the fortunes of England, and the freedom of Spain—What say the jugglers now? with every prediction belied—with their whole plan of snug and sleepy cowardice exposed—with their precious fabric of military metaphysics overturned beyond the powers of impudence or desperation to defend it—with every hope smashed by the evil genius of Wellington—and it would be ungenerous not to add, by the brave

The conscientious *Courier*, on the 11th of December, inserted a document, with the *assumed* sig-

though tardy vigour of Administration.—What is their next resource?—Why, since they could not impose upon us their war system—they would regain their own footing, and that of Buonaparte, by virtue of their *peace system*.—Since they could not prevail upon us to withhold the British troops—nor on those troops and their officers to be defeated and come home again—since, in a word, they could not pervert our victories, they now bestir themselves to rob us of their fruits—and to reimburse the Enemy, and ruin this Country, by recommending destructive principles of pacification, instead of urging, as formerly, those maxims of inglorious warfare, which we have had the spirit and the happiness to repudiate with contempt.

With the *Courier* we have had no recent quarrel. It may, for aught we know, be very honest in its denunciations against the weakness of treating with Buonaparte.—The wish for his downfall, whether wise or not, is at least a popular sentiment. The dread of his perfidy, whether popular or not, is doubtless a salutary terror. But without the aid of the French themselves—and in probable defiance of the feelings of Austria—how, in God's name, can he be dethroned? As for the reptiles of the *Morning Post* we shall disappoint their ambition, and their malice. What have such *things* to do with controversy—what with politics—what with matters of peace, or war, or Government? Let the miscreants be handed over to the Society for the Suppression of Vice.—Let these nuisances against literary decency and dignity have their long ears nailed to some post in Grub-street; or be consigned to a partnership with the common hangman, in the manufacture and sale of last speeches for Newgate.—Let the nauseous manual of discarded footmen and love-sick *filles de chambre*, be put to its purgation by those respectable personages, who hold out encouragements, securities, and rewards to virtuous and faithful servants—but let not the spies and listeners upon domestic life, flatter themselves that state transactions are as much at their disposal, as those of private families—or that public officers are no less easy of access, than their porters.—If these earwigs would be intelligible and in their proper sphere, they will have done with battles, and treaties, and

nature of VERUS. To those who have read the genuine Letters under that name, it may be needless to designate the trash in the *Courier*,* as a dull, and paltry, imposture; and, so far at least, characteristic of its source. How much of dignity—how much of ingenuity—must be ascribed to the Government of a mighty Empire—when a friend of VERUS, on the day preceding that above-mentioned, was told, in the solemn and full-bottomed phraseology of office—that “the *measure!!* (to wit, this imposition) was “decided on,”—and that “such a paper would appear in the following *Courier!*” Fraud itself may be disgraced by mean professors, and forgery dwindle into a folly for which more accomplished rogues would blush. Ministers, it must be owned, are not consistent with themselves,—nor commonly civil to VERUS. They vituperate him, when he talks. When he holds his tongue, they affect to despise him. Were he to state the surest marks of the reverence which he bears them, it is, that he dreads their displeasure, even less than their contempt.

But the writers in official pay, gifted, as they are, with peculiar talents, seem to be rather luckless in the application of them. Their wit, spontaneous, copious, and original, possesses, over the multitudes to whom it is addressed, an influence quite remote

argumentations.—Amongst the dregs of society there is a ready market for folios of impure and calumnious gossiping, with a due proportion of amatory sonnets, candelabras, sofas, crape petticoats, and intrigues.—Dec. 31, 1813.

* Not a line under the true signature of VERUS was ever sent to any journal but “*the Times.*”

from that of average witticism; inasmuch as the tricks of a buffoon, or the gay slaverings of an idiot, never fail to affect each feeling heart with sadness. The true policy of a certain class of politicians would be to *amuse* the people. I have, therefore, long ago, however fruitlessly, recommended, that they should betake themselves from tragic and ghastly mirth, to the sprightlier mock heroism of argumentation, since the gravest muscles are seldom proof against the mimicry of wisdom by an ape.

Wishing to cure, as well as to conciliate, the servants of his Royal Highness, in points with which both taste and humanity are concerned, I must neither be irritating nor oppressive, intemperate nor prolix. It is not that the conduct observed by Administration has given me much encouragement to a change so courteous; for the most concise and familiar of my preceding Letters was received with ungracious reluctance. But chronic ailments, (the present Cabinet for example) of more than half-a-year's standing, call rather for a diet, than a dose. The languor and torpor of a feeble patient, whose frame a rude shock of electricity might overwhelm, may be more safely roused into life by tender, but reiterated touches.

The expectation, which had been formed, of some attempt at a reply to the charges promulgated and enforced by VETUS, has, it seems, turned out to be a tribute of unmerited respect to Ministers. Their silence, or what is worse, the contumacious scurrility of their creatures, proves not so much an indifference

to their accuser, or to their country, as a fixed despair in their own cause;—an utter absence of every colour or pretence, which might help to varnish up their policy, and fit it for public examination. The wonder is, not that they should have fallen into mistakes, however mischievous; these must have been looked for from human nature itself, and tolerated for the sake of our common weakness. The charm consists in the dexterous union,—the well-poised harmony, of their errors.

The crown of glory which the year just ended (1812) ought to have placed upon the head of the British Government, has changed into a crown of martyrdom for the country. Had Ministers but known the power they possessed, they might have prolonged its exercise for ever. One contingent comfort, therefore, yet remains to us. Now mark the even-handed justice of these “Gods.” A moment arrived, at which they loudly boasted, that our eternal foe had plunged into the very jaws of destiny. North, south, east, west—earth and ocean were theirs. No spirit less potent than the evil genius of this empire, could have rescued Buonaparte from destruction. That genius was not idle, nor his efforts vain. The moment did arrive at which it was foreseen that the armies of France, in the south of Europe, would not be reinforced by their master;—magnanimously we refused reinforcements to our own. Buonaparte ran no trifling risk of being overmatched on the shores of the Baltic;—we enlisted the shores of the Atlantic in his service, and gave him America for an

ally. The French troops murmured for want of money;—we faithfully fulfilled the tacit compact, by keeping the British troops for nine months without allowances, and for more than six without pay. But, lest the ascendancy of law, freedom, and public morals, should, in the extreme hour of Napoleon's fate, afford the people of England an unfair advantage over that nation, whom the scourge of despotism was asserted to have driven, if not into the act, avowedly into the spirit of insurrection,—lest internal peace should expiate the evils—the wilful offences of our foreign system—and preserve the island from those contagious miseries, through which alone her enemy could grapple with and destroy her;—even here sanctimonious chivalry stretched forth his arm; and brandishing the torch of religious war, answered with its blaze the signal-fires of French revolutionary discord.

Are these creations of fancy—or exaggerations of fact? Are they not a faint and slender outline of our history? Was it a choice of evils which beset the English Government, and fixed them to the spot on which they stood? Did the enemy so “tower in his pride of place?” Did England and Europe so gasp in dreadful anticipation of that fell swoop, which was to hurry both beyond the sphere of day,—from the regions of political being,—that it is only because Russia has not been annihilated, that this nation is finally reprieved? Rather, *if Russia be not yet safe,—it is because England was not honest.* From the language of Ministers last summer we

may infer, that their perplexity arose from the importunate multitude, not of ills, but of blessings, which assailed them. We were told, that the rescinding the Orders in Council would speedily terminate the American war;—that the hostile force in Spain would sink beneath the stroke of Salamanca, and moulder away in the midst of those privations to which a distracted Empire had consigned it;—that the Peninsula was committed to the hands of Lord Wellington, and that “he would answer for her deliverance:”—that Buonaparte was strained beyond his strength, and would never escape out of Russia;—that the Princes of Germany were to rise as one man, and intercept the Invader in his retreat,*—that, in fine, this campaign (besides restoring the North, which was but an episode) must end so *prosperously for the finances*, †—so honourably for the councils, and so gloriously for the arms of Great Britain,—that Ministers need but say of Napoleon, as the Grecian boaster of his foe,—

“Tell me, you Heavens, in what part of his body
“Shall I destroy him?”

* Much of this has been effected, (though much I am afraid remains behind,) since the period at which Letter 17 was written. The difference between Ministers and VETUS has lately been less with regard to principles than to seasons—the Author contending, that what the campaign of 1813 produced, might have resulted from that of the preceding year—but perhaps we ought gladly to compound on the average, for national prosperity being only twelve months too late.—Dec. 31, 1813.

† The deficit in the *last quarter alone*, as compared with the corresponding one in the former year, amounted to above two millions sterling

It may hereafter become my office to expatiate on the correspondence of these assumptions with events. The Russian Empire *has* gained everlasting glory; and Buonaparte has led to its ruin, an army, two-thirds of which were composed of Frenchmen. Fortune, less blind than Alexander's allies, gave effect to the energies of his people, who bravely fought, while England clapped her hands and stood by. But is the battle ended? When we set up the exertions of France, as the standard by which we measure her necessities, might it not be fair to define the magnitude of those exertions as the element and basis of *her relief*? Are the minor German Governments yet detached from the power in which they originated? Have the French themselves overturned the tyrant's throne? Is Hanover restored? Is America conciliated? Is Spain delivered? Are our finances improved? our councils invigorated? our religious animosities composed? Have we advanced, by the road of Moderation, or of Victory, a single step *towards Peace*? Peace—which a ray of spirit or of wisdom might, within the last six months, have ensured for Europe! Peace—which if human folly had not interposed to retard, the chance of war, unrestrained in its just operations, might ere now have re-established in America! Inestimable Peace—if conquered by England—not wrested, as it may be, from her weakness, her mortifications, or her fears.

Whilst adverting to the past opinions of others, I shall be prepared, when called upon, fully to vindi-

cate my own. They are, indeed, in every article confirmed. Though resolute to abstain from all future notice of those exhibitions in the Treasury Journals, which earn bread for their authors by the abuse of VETUS, I must ever feel it a part of my duty, to acknowledge their condescension, when they reason or narrate. Truth from such quarters is a more than Royal Gift—and argument, a sort of novel substance, which it will be my care to analyze with the curiosity, and to describe with the accuracy of a Chemist.

Ministers ought to admit that they have been kindly and liberally treated. For several months Buonaparte has abandoned the Peninsula—for as many weeks, the press has been left under their charge. With the foreign and domestic enemy thus disposed of, and abundant leisure, we may presume, for the use of their intelligence and unquestioned skill,—what results have they to show, of which they ought not to be ashamed?—what but mere spendthrift's promises to offer? Napoleon “*will*” be destroyed,—and VETUS “*shall*” be silenced. But much as we may admire the multiform genius of this Cabinet,—or classical as the affinity, in former ages, of those characters to which they pretend,—it is not because they have the reputation of Poets, in matter of fact, that they are to fancy themselves Prophets in prediction,

VETUS.

LETTER XVIII.

America.

SIR,

FEBRUARY 8, 1813.

THE preceding year was marked by events no less extraordinary for their coincidence, than for their separate importance.

The war in the Peninsula had languished, on the part of France, since the repulse of Massena from the lines of Torres Vedras. Satisfied with defending himself against the British arms, the French Ruler then changed the direction of his efforts, without the slightest alteration in the purpose to which they were destined. The system of Buona parte on the Spanish territory became in its character, if not in its occurrences, a plan of finance, rather than of warlike enterprise. The defective structure of the native Government,—the defective spirit of ours,—the errors in which they co-operated,—and the essential principles on which they differed,—left room for the introduction of auxiliary engines into the contest; of which the most precious to the enemy, and by far the most powerful, was *time*.

Napoleon so measured the contingencies of the war, to the extent to which *Great Britain* was immediately concerned, that he ventured to rely on his troops already in Spain, aided by English wisdom and energy, for such a continuance of the struggle

as would promote his views, by gradually impairing our resources. To press upon these, was effectually to benumb Lord Wellington. Hence the combined movement in the North and in the West. Hence the double project upon the Atlantic and the Baltic—the main avenues of English commerce. The same month of June, 1812, saw the commencement of the enterprise for which he had armed; and the consummation of that for which he had intrigued. In the same month Buonaparte passed the Niemen—and Mr. Madison (bold Cæsar!) the Rubicon.

Here, then, we are to trace a series of changes, complicating the instruments, without affecting the simplicity of the end. The war of conquest in the Peninsula becomes a struggle of revenue. The scene of hostility is enlarged,—its actors multiplied, and theatrically disposed. England obtains a military ally—France a trading tool: but the plot is uniform, however conducted, and the proposed catastrophe is the ruin of British commerce. On the success or frustration of this French policy, with its practical consequences to Europe, I shall speak at large hereafter. The design of France has been sufficiently clear—to subjugate this Continent into an indirect contributor towards the support of a maritime war; while she flattered America into the foppery of presenting herself as a naval antagonist to Great Britain—or encouraged her in the more rational, though premature ambition, of becoming our manufacturing and commercial rival.

It is not only the interest of Englishmen, but their bounden duty, to revert to the period during which this peculiar policy was undertaken. It is a still deeper interest, and a more pressing duty, to examine generally how far the attempt has been realised; at most of all, to what degree, and in what manner, we may ourselves have discharged the obligation of resisting it—or tamely beheld its formation—or criminally hastened and matured its growth.

This great subject can hardly be discussed as a whole. The simple uniformity of the final end proposed cannot relieve the measures employed from their complexity. Distinct and various, nay, opposite trains of observation, must be applied to the respective hostile powers; and to the spirit and motives through which they have severally proceeded, to cast off the neutral, and to assume the warlike habit. We are, therefore, called upon to consider not one, but, successively, a number of associated questions, involving the conduct and condition both of America and of Europe, as they affect the interests, or ascertain and illustrate the recent councils of Great Britain—whose claim to distinction, under the authors of these councils, rests as fairly on the disgrace and sufferings which she has endured, as the title of France erects itself on the miseries which she has inflicted.

America,* in herself the least powerful member

* In the former series of these Letters of Vetus will be found some details which are authentic, and some predictions which have

of the Belligerent world, is far from being so, relatively to England; while she furnishes, through the medium of that relation, a striking specimen of the

since proved true, as to the causes and course of the American war. Perhaps the war could not have been avoided; but it might, by a little discretion, have been rendered more difficult for Mr. Madison to embody a war party. We might have retarded his progress over the public mind of his people. We might have made him appear more evidently unjust, and unwise, by a more timely display both of our liberality and our force. In its origin, the war might have been so managed as to excite great odium in America, and great enthusiasm here; and whether, in its character of a maritime contest, it has been so administered as to obtain due honour for this country, or to inflict a decent portion of disgrace and loss upon a really despicable foe, I am afraid there is but one opinion on either side of the Atlantic. The few general observations contained in this Letter, on the state of society, and of the national feeling in North America, are derived from an attentive consideration of the best books of travels extant, and from an acquaintance by no means slight with some very intelligent natives of that country. The conquest of Canada, and the growth of American commerce on the ruin of the British, would seem to be the only practical objects of hostility, on the part of the natives, against England. Yet the Southern population, constituting the bulk and spirit of the war faction, are known to view the acquisition of Canada with jealousy, and the increase of commerce with indifference or dislike. Both these sentiments appear to be forgotten by the Government and people, in whose breasts they had hitherto predominated with almost equal strength; for the war into which they plunged could propose no other definite consequence, and all their measures, in the prosecution of it, have amounted to an actual renunciation of their old prejudices. Can this be rationally accounted for otherwise than by admitting the vicious influence of Buonaparte, acting directly upon the American cabinet, and, covertly and obliquely through that medium, upon the people? Letters 18, 20, 21, 22, and Philo-Vetus, April 5, are those which (in the present volume) contain the principal notices on America.—Dec. 31, 1813.

genius and character recently displayed by the latter. But fully to understand this mingled relation, we may previously, and not unprofitably, bestow some thought on the actual condition of America; that is to say, on circumstances independent of those which appear in statistical documents or essays—and which appertain less to the province of reasoning, than of specific and recorded fact.

Those who have employed their time in studying the parties which divide the British empire, must be aware of the difficulties attending such an investigation, and of the honest errors to which it often unavoidably leads. By such persons it will be judged far less extraordinary, that the nature and objects of party amongst a foreign nation should constitute a topic yet more perplexing, and considerably more liable to error. Indeed, we labour here under many prejudices as to the dispositions of the people in the United States. We are used to talk about a French party, and an English party, as if such were genuine, distinct, and primeval denominations of certain classes of inhabitants in North America. This I believe to be a radical misapprehension. The two descriptions of people who may be safely contrasted in America are, substantially, the agricultural and the commercial class. From the properties *natural* to these two conditions, throughout the several stages of their progress, and under forms which, though acted upon by certain extraneous causes, they nevertheless, with some regularity, assume, may be steadily traced the main course of popular

emotion. It is amongst the republicans of the United States, above all other assemblages of mankind now subject to the eye of the observer, that we may hope to mark, with some approach to precision, each stream of feeling as it rises from a remote and solitary spring, to where it disembogues in the ocean of general policy. But newly born, the body politic of America is still uncovered. The robes of a complete and refined civilization have not yet concealed her shape or movements. She stands before us a figure, gross, perhaps, and offensive,—but visible, definite, and undisguised.

In an infant country, peopled, as in the present case, by emigration from one more advanced, industry becomes the national habit, and affluence—or subsistence—the universal pursuit. The only sound basis of our reasoning, therefore, on the motives and passions of the American people, may be said to consist in a just calculation of what *their sense of interest* would prescribe to them. This remark is well sustained by Talleyrand, in his short and beautiful paper :—“ Toutes les ardeurs du moment s’y portent vers les moyens d’accroître promptement son bien-être ; et voila en résultat, *la grand cause* du calme parfait des Americains, pour tout ce qui n’est pas, dans cet ordre d’idées, ou moyen, ou obstacle.”—p. 17.

With the exception, indeed, of one other sentiment, not here alluded to by this philosophical writer, the above passage comprehends the whole principle of action acknowledged on the other side

of the Atlantic. National pride can have little prevalence over a people to whom honourable ancestors and a national history are unknown. Devotion, with a dispersed and busy population, cools from a superstitious or sectarian frenzy into a tranquil exercise, regulated by convenience, and fostered mainly by habit; while the love of money, now tainting, now inflaming that of liberty, quells by its aid all rival passions, and turns instinctively to its own use the vizer and garb of which it spoils them.

Hence the spirit of military conquest—of political encroachment—or unmixed ambition, however seemingly perceptible in the transactions of these States, would, it is probable, be no less unjustly ascribed to the *people* of America, than that of luxury, or philosophy, or devotion. Hence the love or hatred of England or of France must be sought for amongst that tribe of inclinations which are rather secondary and casual, than native and original, in the minds of our Western neighbours. Whether in the person of agriculturist or merchant, the great standing party is the American party. Foreign countries are regarded with complaisance or disgust, merely as they offer themselves on the road to wealth, under the aspect of facilities or obstructions.

I have said that these two classes of men compose in America the grand divisions of society. The sagacious and observant author whom I have quoted thus briefly expounds the leading difference between the secluded husbandman and the merchant inhabiting the cities:—"Le commerce, qui étend les rap-

“ports de l’homme a l’homme, multiplie nécessairement ses betoins ; et l’agriculture, qui le circonscrit dans la famille, nécessairement aussi les réduit.”—p. 18.

The merchant, therefore, in the regular prosecution of his trade, anxiously deals with that nation which can best supply his wants and afford the best market for his produce. A sort of neighbourly feeling likewise grows out of the intercourse necessary to such reciprocal accommodation : and thus an habitual, though comparatively feeble, sentiment is superadded to the more rigorous and undeviating laws of self-interest, which helps to dispose the mercantile body towards maintaining with its customers the relations of peace, as essential to the plenitude of maritime commerce.

To the present, but accidental, eminence of England in those qualities which enable her to meet the wants of North America, she is indebted for the whole of that amicable spirit which has given a false title to those whom it actuates—under the denomination of the “English party.” This spirit, speaking of it in general terms, animates only the more affluent classes, who can enjoy the greatest number of indulgences—the inhabitants of cities, with whom most luxuries are in use—and the Northern provinces, whose enterprise is the most extensive, and their traffic the most direct and important with Great Britain. Now if we were to reason *à priori* on the sense of the landed interest of any community in relation to foreign commerce, we should not

hesitate to infer a powerful sympathy between the landholder and the merchant. He who finds a foreign market for the surplus produce is surely no less desirable for him who raises that produce, than the farmer who provides is necessary to the merchant who exports it. Yet the connection between these two classes, rooted as it is in the nature of things, and developed and demonstrated by universal experience, does not seem to have impressed the cultivators of America with its truth. However strictly identified with the exporting merchant, in all that relates to his progressive welfare, the rustic stands aloof from every other, where passion, opinion, or political action is concerned. He remains insensible to those indirect motives which regulate the dispositions of those who dwell on the coast and in the cities with regard to foreign States, having seldom tasted the gratifications, or felt the desires, to which commerce naturally gives birth. Articles of the first necessity—that is, of the only necessity with which he is conversant—are either fabricated under his own roof, or, being of *American* workmanship, are brought to his own door. Thus, measuring his wants by the amplitude of his domestic means, he wonders when you talk to him of privations—of privations imputable to his native Government—or of conveniences which would, under peaceful auspices, be easily derivable from Great Britain.

But there is another distinction to be found amongst the inhabitants of America, which, whilst

it aggravates the bad consequences produced by the former, springs, undoubtedly, from a different source. Federalism and anti-federalism are genuine and primary principles of party, of which the English, and what is unjustly called the Gallican spirit, are mere concomitants, and far from unquestionable symptoms. Attachment to federalism, and to commerce,—and, incidentally, to English commerce,—may be considered as so far sister-passions, that they flourish chiefly amongst the same orders of society, and over the same regions of the American world. Men, who by experience are qualified to appreciate the benefits and blessings which may be drawn from the peaceful intercourse of nations—they it is who have also proved themselves most alive to the wisdom of preserving for the Commonwealth the permanency and integrity of its character, by assisting the necessary operation of Government, and strengthening the Authorities of the State. The favourers of this system are identified with those of the Commercial System—with the affluent inhabitants of cities, and, generally speaking, with those of the Northern Provinces, who form, it may be safely asserted, the most generous, manly, and enlightened portion of the people of North America. These may be called, in contrast with their opponents, the cavaliers of the Western Republic.

A bias towards the extreme of democracy has been generated by the circumstances in which the husbandman is placed, and it is congenial to the habits which he indulges;—when he retires to the

verge of civil, and touches on savage life, he no longer feels the restraints of law, nor hears the voice of the Magistrate. If the restrictive institutions of society ought to multiply in a direct ratio with its members, how can he who inhabits the solitude be supposed capable of exercising an unprejudiced will, or an informed judgment, on a proposal of even the most salutary accession to the bulk of legal power, which ends in leaving some new, however necessary weapon, in the hands of the executive authority? Ranging unresisted over a wide and passive scene—perfect *freedom*—and absolute *dominion*—are blended in himself. Is it, then, surprising that this untamed and untutored autocrat, rioting in the orgies of volition, and in the supremacy of animal might, should feel vain-glorious of that independence which stamps him not only a free-man, but a Sovereign—and jealous of those encroachments on his liberty, which would threaten him with participators in his power?

Such, though with exceptions, is the average material of which the mass of American democracy is composed. Such is he who, at the instigation of appropriate counsellors and leaders, starts forth as the champion of what in England has been termed anti-federalism,—setting himself, at all times, and in all directions, against the growth, or even duration of public authority—jealous of the Magistrate—jealous of each neighbouring State—jealous of the local Assembly of his own State—jealous of the supreme power of Congress over that and every

other Assembly—ready to make civil government impossible—by way of making liberty secure—risking any species or amount of public ruin for the sake of any experiment in the infant science of reform—sullen and distrustful—outrageous and vindictive—hating the merchant because he is a federal aristocrat—hating England because she is not hated by the merchant—and brandishing against those statelier forms which grace the moral world, the same axe by which a wilderness was subdued.

Thus stands the gaunt leveller—arrogant, boisterous, and uncouth—not a friend to this country, I confess—but, assuredly, *not a Frenchman*.

I have dwelt so long upon a branch of the subject, the least attractive of any which will be likely to occur in the course of our American discussions, because it is of importance to put your readers on inquiring with what sort of enemies they have to contend. The two orders already mentioned—the merchant and the agriculturist—constitute the *natural* divisions of this republican people; Federalist and Democrat are the *political* divisions—English or French is purely a satirical epithet, denoting, like other nicknames, rather the bitterness of its inventors than their justice.

We have seen the agricultural interests of America misconceived and abandoned by the landholder himself, whose blind enmity to the advancement of his own personal prosperity, involving a violent departure from the ruling principle which has governed, though without success, the trading body,

seems to rest on no more probable grounds than gross ignorance, political animosity, and the studied machinations of a third domestic power altogether unnoticed in the preceding sketch—namely, the *American Government*.

VETUS.

LETTER XIX.

V—C—Bill.

SIR,

LONDON, FEB. 13, 1813.

LEST I should by possibility be confounded with certain captious enemies of the excellent Bill, for giving Great Britain a low C—— as well as a high one—or, as *Captain Fluellen* would term it, “a Lort Elton the little as well as Lort Elton the pig”—I beg to state the following arguments on behalf of this wise and provident appointment, since they appear to my weak judgment, nearly, if not altogether, unanswerable.

1. Because the number of suits in —— has not increased since the days of Lord Hardwicke—and because it is an admitted fact, that the said suits are now terminated with a rapidity beyond example—and with so much satisfaction that appeals are quite unknown—it necessarily follows that there cannot be an enormous, frightful, and deplorable arrear of equity due to the public either in the Court of —— or in the H—— of L——.

2. Because the number of bankruptcies is a sure indication of the prosperity of commerce—and because the said bankruptcies in the year 1812 amounted to nearly twice the usual number, it proves that commerce in 1812 was nearly, if not absolutely, twice as prosperous, as in any former year.

3. Because the number of bankrupt commissions, in the year of our Lord 1812, did not exceed the gross number of *eighteen hundred*—yielding into the breeches-pocket of my Lord ———, the average fee of 15*l.* per commission—it is clear that, according to the best rules of computation, the whole amount of the fees on said commissions of bankruptcy, could not exceed the moderate sum of 27,000*l.*

4. Because (whatever fees may arise out of suits in ———), the regular salary of the Lord ——— amounts to no more than 10,000*l.*—it is certain, that by adding thereto his profits on bankruptcies, the joint income would be only 37,000*l.*—even, therefore, if we were to countenance the illiberal practice of taking into the estimate any other little cheese-parings, by which his Lordship's house may be maintained, or candle-ends by which it may be illuminated, there is no probability that the entire income paid into the aforesaid breeches-pocket of my Lord, would be more than from 40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* per annum.

5. Because it is a matter of state dignity and necessity, that the Lord ——— ——— should live with a splendour becoming that exalted rank, which gives him precedence of every D—— in England—and because it is a matter of public notoriety, that at no period of English history was the said rank maintained in a manner so extraordinary, or so characteristic of the personage who bears it, as at present—it is perfectly palpable to every generous mind, that the before-mentioned income never exceeding

40 or 50 thousand pounds per annum, will not admit, during the life time of this 1—d L—— the smallest abridgement or diminution.

6. Because it is essential to the happiness of the nation, not only that the Lord —— should live in splendour, but leave his posterity in affluence also, it has become very desirable to provide for the latter object, by lightening his fatigues, without curtailing his profits—a measure which must have a twofold advantage—first, His life will become longer, as his drudgery becomes less; by which means the trifle he saves from year to year may at length amount to a decent competency—and secondly he may afford somewhat more attention than he now can to the *main* chance, meaning thereby the great duty and purpose for which his Lordship consented to undertake the office of Lord ——.

7. Because the new Lieutenant, who must act under this great Captain of the W—k, is to have a *certain* salary of 5,000*l.* per annum, it is perfectly right and consistent that the quantum of business allotted to him should have no other rule than the will and pleasure of his principal—that is to say, because the salary will be fixed, it follows, of course, that the labour ought to be arbitrary.

8. Because the Lord —— in his watchful tenderness towards the public purse, will take special care that the offices *under* him shall not degenerate into sinecures, it is exceedingly probable that his new Lieutenant may be honoured with such a portion of the business hitherto executed, or deliberated upon I

should say, by his Lordship in person, that the most censorious will never accuse the former, of eating the bread of idleness. This must be allowed to bear a nice analogy to the state of the military service, wherein the subaltern officer is defined to be one, who does the most duty, and receives the least pay.

9. Because there has hitherto been but one stage of Appeal, for C—— Suitors—namely from the Lord —— to the H—— of L——; whence it arises that there are now no appeals whatever before the latter tribunal, the few which ever came there having been rapidly disposed of, so that the practice has become obsolete, and the forms of it likely to be forgotten—it is quite necessary to revive and invigorate this ornament of equity—this freehold for the learned profession. Nothing, therefore, can argue more parental foresight, than to give to the C—— in solemn wedlock, this rib detached from his own learned body, that out of their elaborate embraces may spring a new and lovely generation, of bills, interlocutories, reversals, and appeals—in the aggregate more numerous than a frog's spawn—and each more long-lived than a toad.

10. Because the Lord —— enjoys certain fees in bankrupt cases—which, however, I have shown to be extremely moderate, considering the opulence from which they are exacted, and the misery which they are destined to relieve—because I have likewise taken it for granted, that these perquisites are in the direct ratio of our commercial prosperity, of

which they furnish, indeed, the most gratifying proof—it follows to my mind as a necessary consequence, that whatever laudable earnestness his Lordship may indulge for the prosperity of his own fees, must influence him by an easy effort of ratiocination to watch with *deep anxiety* the interests of our commerce.

11. And whereas it has been wickedly suggested by Sir S—— R—— that bankrupt cases should be withdrawn from the superintendence of the —— under the shallow pretext of their swallowing up his Lordship's time—now I not only dissent, in toto, from this “factionous” recommendation, but I dissent for the following clear-close-conclusive climax of reasonings, viz.

12. Because, as I said before, the manner in which bankruptcies affect the personal interests of any Chancellor, must naturally secure his Lordship's attention to the general interests of trade.

13. Because, the more ample the amount of that species of emoluments, the more certainly we ought to reckon on his solicitude about the source whence it arises.

14. Because, from the mode in which the commerce of this country has been regulated and disciplined for some years past—inasmuch as by the operation of Orders in Council, coupled with a certain dexterous system of licenses, the whole trade of the Empire has been more or less administered by the Council Board, of which my Lord —— pro tempore is a leading member—nothing can be more

evident than the benefits which we may derive from the zealous interference of any high Magistrate feelingly alive to the encouragement or sudden check of speculation—and intimately blended, in his personal welfare, with the prosperity or ruin of the merchant.

15. Because, so long as an Officer of State, at the head of that Council Board which has been so conspicuous in its administration of our commerce, shall feel himself involved in the general condition of that commerce, we may reasonably trust that no indifference or estrangement on his part will suffer him to permit the continuance of any system, under which the foolish Merchant would be left to his own devices—or traffic to its own untutored course. Let us fondly hope therefore, that we may not have long to lament the suppression of Licenses, or the abolition of Orders in Council—the first of which were so ruinous to France—the second, to America—but, I confess, should the current of Bankruptcy be diverted into any other judicial channel, it must greatly tend to damp my expectation that either of these blessings will be restored to us.

16. Because the profits, perquisites, and jurisdiction, heretofore annexed to the office of Lord ————combined, I must confess, with the manifold accomplishments which in most cases adorn that noble person, strike me to display the very flower of what is ingenious in theory—proved by the happiest and most unalloyed effects—his Lordship's interests, and those of the commercial world, being so involved,—

indeed I may say entangled—that it is difficult to separate them even in thought—the recent commercial practices of the British Government having enabled the person holding that station, to operate powerfully upon these interests so notoriously mixed—and the state of the Empire, no less than the acknowledged character of the man, leaving it evident with how much virtue and liberality the influence so enjoyed would be exerted.—Here are will, power, and merit!—what would people have more?

17. Because it is considerably clearer than daylight that the projected salary of 5,000*l.* per annum will not cost the nation a single farthing; inasmuch as it is to be provided for out of the “Dead Fund” in ———; a fund which consists of money, originally deposited by private suitors, who died, *suddenly*, as is supposed, with all their representatives, in the few days which elapsed between the beginning and termination of their suits.—Now, either this fund belongs to the public—or it does not.—If, as some weak people suppose, the community at large in the person of its Government be the absolute heir of such of its Members as leave no other representatives, we must allow it to be physically impossible, that property so acquired could serve any other purpose, than that of supporting a V—— C———. If on the other hand the money be *not* public property, our moral right is equally unquestionable, to dispose of it just as we please. Q. E. D.

Should Ministers or their friends condescend, so far, as to use the preceding hints or any part of them,

on behalf of this most efficacious Bill, when it comes before the Committee on Monday next, I shall flatter myself with having done some service to the cause.— But if my Lord ——— should adopt these principles, he must take the application of them on his own shoulders.—Were his Lordship to use my arguments like his own, it might puzzle the country gentlemen to guess for which side they were intended.*

VETUS.

P. S. A great deal will turn on the simple question, whether the proposed V—— C—— in his capacity of Under Conscience-keeper to the ——, is to have the handling of the R—— Scruples; or to settle and compound the various obligations, which any future S—— may contract, political, moral, and religious? Should this be the case, even Sir Samuel Romilly must confess, that it would be cruel to saddle the “unfortunate Gentleman” with the additional charge of *Common Bankruptcies*.

* It has been asserted by some speculative critics, that the above Letter relates to the Vice Chancellor's Bill. For my part I do not believe it.—The initials V—— C—— are very indeterminate—Vice Chamberlain—Veterinary College—Voluntary Contribution—Viscount Castlereagh, nay Volunteer Company, as borne out by the allusion to Captain Fluellen in the first paragraph, would correspond equally with the Letters V—— C——. The Captain it is true seems to point rather awkwardly at the title of a certain learned Lord, but we must not annex too hasty a translation to the gibberish of an ancient Briton of the 15th century. My conjecture, that we have mistaken the true subject of Letter 19, rests on the difficulty of recon-

ciling its statements and reasonings with those truths, which, on that assumed subject, are pretty generally acknowledged.

1. There is actually known to be an enormous arrear of equity both in Chancery and in the House of Lords.

2. The number of Bankruptcies does *not* necessarily bear a direct proportion to the prosperity of Commerce.

3. The Lord Chancellor is a Man of Fashion, and therefore makes no use of a breeches-pocket; on the contrary, his Lordship stuffs every thing into the embroidered purse, which he carries about as Ladies do their *ridicules*.

4. The Chancellor's income has never much exceeded 30,000*l.* in one year, instead of 40 or 50,000*l.* as obliquely asserted by V——; a clear proof that some other gentleman must have been intended by the author.

5. It is *not* notorious that the rank of Lord Chancellor is at present supported to any extraordinary or extravagant degree; nor, on the other hand, if we suppose the expressions of V—— to be ironical, is there any living witness to the fact of the Noble Lord setting down his guests to short fare, at least in the Court of Chancery.

6. It is not true that the slightest resemblance subsists between the situation of the Vice Chancellor, and that of a subaltern in the army in point of professional duty, though there may possibly be some little with regard to pay, their incomes being nearly on a level.

7. There has no "solemn wedlock" taken place between the Lord Chancellor and the Vice, nor have they ever embraced in public, or been discovered caressing each other in their retired moments.—The only ground for suspicion that any such circumstances have occurred, is the appearance of some of that "numerous progeny" predicted and referred to by Vetüs.

8. It is by no means clear, that the accumulation of what is called the "Dead Fund," has proceeded from the *sudden* deaths of Chancery Suitors and their various representatives—nor that only a few days had elapsed, as VETÜS is supposed to insinuate, between the commencement and termination of their respective suits. On the contrary, it is fair to presume, that most of the parties died of ordinary ailments—many, of chronic distempers—some of extreme old age—aggravated for the most part, as we are informed, by impatience, dis-

appointment, vexation, poverty, and despair ; whence it would appear that really and truly, the business of the Court of Chancery has hardly ever been hurried on with indecent or dangerous rapidity.

9. It is absolutely untrue, as alleged by VERUS, that the British Licenses were quite ruinous to France, or the Orders in Council to America ; for if they had, it is but candid to infer that the Licenses would have been immediately discontinued, and the Orders much sooner revoked.

10. The "hints" and arguments advanced by VERUS, could not have been designed for the *bond fide* "use of Ministers ;" nor for the support of the Vice Chancellor's Bill—on the contrary, it really looks as if they were thrown out in opposition to it ; that is, if they had any reference to it at all. Moreover, it was suspected by some, that neither his Majesty's Ministers, nor their measures, were, at the time when this appeared, much in the author's good graces.

Upon the whole of this great Equity question, we must hear farther arguments before we can decide.—EDITOR. Dec. 1813.

LETTER XX.

America.

SIR,

FEBRUARY, 15, 1813.

IN framing the Federal Constitution of 1789, the leading politicians of America were actuated by the spirit of patriots, and in no small degree by the pride of philosophers. Washington, Hamilton, Jay, Jefferson, &c., were far from unacquainted with the important truth, that no system of Government, since history deserved the name of evidence, had been freely chosen by an entire people, or established with their formal consent. The philosophic statesmen of Europe reasoned on grounds, which justified them in pronouncing it a visionary project; for they discussed it relatively to the old nations of Europe, whose pre-existent institutions would affix the deepest criminality upon an undertaking, which must succeed through their forcible subversion. The most enlightened of those who contended for the right, were appalled by the hideous consequences of its exercise.

American legislators, after the war of the revolution, had no such moral scruples to deter, nor practical difficulties to defeat them. There—all had been already finished. The Royal edifice, long assaulted by our colonists, tumbled over into the ocean—its destroyers were not buried in the ruins. The Convention, from the several States of the

Union, knew their own advantages over ancient and modern times. They had an incalculable facility in having little or nothing to pull down. They had a safe and noble instrument to work with, namely, the Representative System—unknown in principle to the wisest nations of antiquity—unknown to those of modern Europe, in the degree to which it was acknowledged by North America, where its basis was more extensive than personal freedom.*

We are not going into the merits, or demerits (both numerous enough), of the constitution then formed by the people of the United States. It was the boast of that day, of their ablest and most active leaders, that they had set an example to the human race, by raising a political monument of art and wisdom—which comprehended within it all those perfections that elsewhere had been the growth of centuries; and excluded from its composition every injurious tendency, which experience had yet discovered, or patriotism deplored, in the passive, irrelevant, ill-assorted structure of all chance-begotten

* The Black (or slave) population of the United States is not excluded from that census which forms the basis of the Representative body. This gives the free inhabitants of the Southern provinces, where the proportion of slaves is by far the greatest, an ascendancy in Congress over the free Citizens of the Northern and Eastern States. Whereas, if the calculation were made upon the relative numbers of freemen only, the Representatives of the North and East would considerably preponderate in Congress.—This fact was urged in the Assembly of Massachusetts—and, I believe, of New York, within the present year, as a serious topic of jealousy and complaint—if not as an inducement to separation.—Dec. 31, 1813.

constitutions. Happy had they ascertained from experience the imperfections to which they must submit, as well as those which its lessons might qualify them for avoiding. Infancy is in the commonwealth, what it is in the animal, that sort of imperfection which time only can supply. The sages of America however (I speak now of the founder of the Jeffersonian school), were not satisfied with having outstripped the example of man—they long ago resolved to force the capabilities of nature. It was not sufficient that the federal republic should come forth a thriving babe. It must be at years of discretion from the birth. This fruit and emblem of supreme intelligence must be armed, aye,—accomplished and adorned too—mature in wisdom, and terrible in beauty, at the very moment when she starts from the brain of the empirical Jupiter.

Husbandry would have appeared to any sober mind, the proper sphere, and staple occupation of this republic in her childhood. Her position on the banks of many noble rivers, and for an immense line along the coast of the Atlantic ocean, would naturally annex so much of commercial facility to her agricultural industry, as would powerfully encourage her in the pursuit of that industry, and hasten its progress to perfection and to wealth. The ocean was the obvious high road to a market, for the produce of the American farmer—and the export trade was a mere servant, employed for his advantage. This, it is pretty manifest, would gradu-

ally have led to such an accumulation of capital as must have found vent in home manufactures. Mr. Jefferson inverts this dull order of Providence. In the merchant, he sees not the servant of the landed interest, but its rival. By way of making his country *independent* of other countries—that is, specifically of England,—he will have her begin to manufacture before her time—not out of the redundancy of her produce, but by the transfer of her industry—by taking hands from the barn to supply the loom. The consequence of this on the permanent welfare of North America, it would be needless and tedious to declaim upon. It must, in one word, be productive of a premature and ricketty manhood—the forerunner of an early old age. Such, however, as it was, Mr. Madison has professedly adopted the promising theory of his predecessor. He also, like the clown in the pantomime, has pulled up the young tree by the root, to try how it would grow with the top downwards. He declared open war against the mercantile interest, asserting boldly that he would spring from husbandry to manufacture, without the intervention of commerce. By this enterprise, which in the language of Lord Clarendon, would be “a flight rather than a growth,” the American President announced himself to the great body of cultivators, as their champion against the trading aristocracy of the cities—to the whole nation he held forth the ascendancy it would procure for them, over the terrified manufacturers, and wavering rulers of Great Britain; both which classes

of persons might be skilfully played off, to their mutual perplexity and consternation—to the amusement of the political world, and to the solid benefit of the United States. In the preparation of his scheme, the American landholder was his ally—in its progress, Buonaparte assisted him; whilst, in its accomplishment, so far as the great mass of mischief could be entailed on England alone, and America almost wholly exempted—he wisely calculated on the English Ministers, for whatever portion of complaisance he might require.

It is not my province to defend this adventurer, upon whom it was the duty of the British government to have long ago visited the fruits of his own transgressions. A paltry, yet plausible exercise of intrigue, has diffused itself over every part of his administration. His management of elections at home, has been the type of his foreign policy. He has seldom mistaken the occasion on which to whine or bluster. The spirit with which he was treated by the Rulers of England and of France, being inversely as their power to injure him, he governed himself by a regard to the men, more than to their means. He crouched to the Conqueror who disdained him; and as base minds are quick to the perception of baseness, he trampled on the English Ministers;—taking insult and robbery from the great Napoleon with as much submission, as he received our civilities with contempt. We may question whether his policy was French in its principle, but undoubtedly it became so in its consequences. His

theory was adverse to English commerce. A war with England, long I am persuaded, in his view, would most effectually destroy all commercial intercourse with that Power—the alliance of Buonaparte, therefore, was a natural feature in the plan of hostility to Great Britain.—Of this alliance, though it existed perhaps in the shape of a mere understanding, there are legible traces throughout the last three years.—The joint intrigues of the two Governments were then set in motion to debauch the public mind of America, without whose concurrence, or acquiescence, no measure of any magnitude could succeed.

Throughout the Southern States they had little difficulty; the hatred of aristocracy amongst the slave-dealing democrats, having outrun the zeal of Mr. Madison. With those of the North, the task was more unpromising. But here the British Orders in Council operated to assist his machinations. Without meaning to dispute the original justice of those Orders, much less the validity of the *lex talionis*, on which they professed to be founded, I think it certain that they deprived England of many friends, although it is true, they left her many, amongst that class—the commercial class—in which only, her friends were to be enumerated. The emissaries of the President took this occasion to represent Great Britain, and successfully too, as the oppressor of the rights of commerce.

But as a proof how very inadequate, in the minds of the better orders, were the grounds of dispute

alleged against England by Mr. Madison, it is curious to observe that *all* the motives, whether in the form of provocation or encouragement, successively urged in favour of hostilities, were addressed to the people of the Northern States. These States contain the great bulk of the maritime population, and possess by much the most extensive trade;—so that if the Orders in Council distressed that trade; or the impressment of seamen aggrieved the mariners, it was the Northern people who ought more especially to have murmured. The conquest of Canada was again held out as a seduction, to those who felt no provocation—but Canada was a boon to the North. Nay, that boon itself was a terror to the South—so that every incentive whether of aggrandisement or of redress, applied itself to the bosoms of New York, Boston, &c. Yet these, who alone could have been disposed to a war with England, by any definite impulse, however slight, remained unmoved or reluctant—whilst they who were absolutely devoid of all rational motive, burned with impatience to engage in it. This is a mystery, which I confess myself not fully qualified to solve. Whatever may be the opinion of the nation at large respecting the policy of the Orders in Council, we have at least a right to argue them as enjoying all along the special confidence and protection of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent's Ministers.

Whoever will refer to the instructions of Lord Wellesley to Mr. Foster, throughout the year 1811,—closing with the admirable dispatch of the 28th

January, 1812—may see the case stated on behalf of England, with a force and simplicity beyond all praise. The last mentioned dispatch is rendered doubly interesting, by its having very shortly preceded the departure of that Noble Secretary from office. It seems moreover to speak the language of a Minister, secretly conscious that the extreme forbearance of this country demanded rather *an apology*, than an exposition. No new proposal is contained in that document—the pretensions of America are considered not only inadmissible, but hostile—not so much inviting us to negotiate, as precluding every fair prospect of amicable discussion, or of continued peace. That was the moment to lay the case of Great Britain before the public. By the justice of our cause, made manifest in due season, and without the appearance of constraint, we should have at least obtained unanimity amongst the people of England; and appealed, through the medium of their unanimous voice, directly from the perverse evasions, and presumptuous menaces of Mr. Madison, to the reason or the fears of the American people; for though we may recognise no more than two parties already spoken of, as constituting the main divisions of America—there are moderate men sufficient to turn the scale.

Nothing but a rational and well-considered probability of still arriving at peace through the means of negotiation, could have justified these Ministers for retarding the disclosure of our diplomatic relations with America, one hour after the position in

which we stood, was such as to lay this country under most of the disadvantages of a belligerent, while it invested her with no corresponding rights.

But will it be contended, that our discussions with Mr. Madison's Government, from January to June, 1812, made the slightest advance towards a state of amity, or that they did not become daily of a more unpromising and irritating nature?

The hostility of the President towards every thing under the name of British, which was long ago evident to all the world, has been lately insisted on by Lord Liverpool's Cabinet, as the chief, amongst the causes of the war. Such a sentiment entertained by Mr. Madison was the more likely to issue in an open rupture, because it was fairly attributable to a political theory, as its source.

Hopeless, therefore, of succeeding with this hostile ruler, the only mode by which we could effectually influence him, would be through the operation of popular feeling both in Great Britain and in America. What then was our management of that great engine, so powerful in the hands of a wise Administration; so perilous, if tampered with by a feeble one? This diplomatic intercourse which had become retrograde between our Ministers and America, quickened and flourished in the same proportion, between her and the agents of Buonaparte. Time was afforded for these active confederates, to undertake and execute a series of practices upon the public feeling on both sides of the Atlantic. Perpetual fomentations were applied to the acrimonious

humours of America. Clamour and violence were encouraged in the artisans of England. The fraudulent paper of the French Government, fabricated on the 28th April, 1812—ante-dated by whole years—fallacious in all its parts—and contemptuous even to derision, towards our Ministers, was gravely notified to them by the American Chargé d’Affaires on the 20th day of May following, as a frank and authentic act of the Imperial Government. We must indeed admit that the merit of suggesting this fraud, belongs originally to the English Cabinet, who had invited some such instrument in name and form, by their wise declaration of April the 21st. This document was notified to the English Foreign Secretary on the 20th May, 1812,—a fact which is of some importance.

In the mean time, the outcries of our manufacturers become loud, incessant, and to such a Ministry in no slight degree formidable. A motion is announced in the House of Commons for the repeal of their Orders in Council,—long proclaimed by Lord Liverpool and his associates, to be the very corner-stone of our salvation. Petitions, conformable to the spirit of the notice, load the table of the House Commons. Petition is backed by commotion out of doors—by eloquence and numbers within them.—Ministers judge, and feel, and act in character. There is no alternative,—the men, or the measures, must fall. What then becomes of the vital principle?—what of the corner-stone? Away they go—vitality and salvation—the Orders are

given up,—and the Ministers keep themselves in office.

But the repeal of these sacred, though obnoxious Orders, is dated the 23d day of June,—and grounded, on what? On the majority against Ministers? or on the state of the empire? No such thing:—not a word of outrageous manufacturers,—refractory Members,—or the moral duty of retaining the Ministerial seats!—We are referred back to the dirty French fabrication of the 28th of April, preceding—officially notified to Lord Castlereagh, on the 20th of May,—as if it were the true and genuine basis of the Act, by which we revoked our Orders in Council—although that instrument of revocation was executed by the Ministers of the Prince Regent, not until fifty-six days after the alleged repeal by Buonaparte—not until thirty-four days after the formal notification of that repeal,—*but* within two after their defeat by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons.

Are these the persons to whom we may entrust the conduct of a war, and extrication of this country from her embarrassments? Men who abandoned the only ground on which they had pledged themselves to defend the Empire! What security have we against their disgracing us by other concessions; in their tendency even more destructive,—and from motives equally base? How are we to guard the *right of impressment*, the life and essence of the British navy, from the same fate which befell the

Orders in Council?—while it rests, for protection, on the same sordid weakness, by which those Orders were betrayed? The history of such a Cabinet is that of a cool speculation, with how small a share of national greatness and prosperity England will be satisfied, in return for the tolerance she affords them.

But we were told by Lord Castlereagh, that the revocation of the Orders would avert, or terminate, the American war. It was my lot to express a very opposite apprehension,—and we have recently been informed by this Noble Lord and his coadjutors, that “the *real origin* of the present contest will be found in that spirit which has long unhappily actuated the Councils of the United States—their marked partiality in palliating and assisting the aggressive tyranny of France.” (Vid. Declaration of Prince Regent, Jan. 9, 1813.)—How then could any rational being hope to appease a spirit so deadly, by an act which, nevertheless, the Noble Lord thought fit to justify, only on such an expectation? The war, I believe, was resolved on by Mr. Madison,—and hastened from a fear lest the English Ministers should anticipate him,—not by vigour—he understood them too well—but by a surrender of the Orders in Council so speedily, as would propitiate the public feelings of America. Had the revocation taken place even a fortnight before-hand, or promptly and immediately resulted from that French document, which it afterwards assumed as

its foundation,—it has long been the opinion of every moderate American, that the President could not have risked his Declaration of War.

But if the original signature of the Orders in Council,—(on whose *justice*, however, I have abstained from making any observation,)—if these Orders, when originally promulgated, had the effect of loosening some portion of that confidence which numbers of the commercial body hitherto reposed in the forbearance and liberality of Great Britain—still more mischief was entailed upon her by the well-known circumstances, under which their pressure was withdrawn. The friends of Ministers need not deceive themselves. The revocation of the Orders was ascribed distinctly to *fear*. The state of the manufacturers, and of parties in England,—still more the necessities of the Spanish war,—were as well understood at New York, as on the Exchange of London. It was fully comprehended that the Orders, or the Administration, must have gone. Those of the advocates of England, therefore, who maintained, in America, the justice of these commercial instruments, and their indispensable necessity to our welfare, were gagged at once by the forced and pusillanimous repeal,—which falsified their assertions, refuted their arguments,—and exposed them to the contempt of supporting a system, now sacrificed as untenable by its authors.*

* The papers presented by Mr. Madison to Congress, bear out and authenticate every syllable here alleged by VERUS. As to the construction placed by the people of America on the acts of the

This is the true fate of a selfish and sordid policy, —which wanders from principles in pursuit of momentary accommodations; not satisfied with executing a restrictive measure, which alienates the majority of our friends,—we confound the only advocates that remain to us, by the motives through which it is abandoned.

The next division of this subject, which involves the conduct of the war thus begun, I have neither time, nor space, to enter upon at present.

VETUS.

British Government, and the rebound of that opinion on their feelings—Mr. Russel's Letter—not made public for more than six months after this number of *VETUS*—takes precisely the same ground of reasoning as to the fallacy of referring the repeal of the Orders to the pretended Decree of Buonaparte dated April 28, fixing it on the evidence offered to the House of Commons, and on the influence of that evidence over the public here. Mr. Munroe's State Paper, though often shuffling, dishonourable, and disgusting, is not destitute occasionally of strength or acuteness, and may be read with profit.

This Letter of *VETUS*, Number 20, appeared in the Times, the morning of the 18th February, the day on which the principle of the American question was debated in both Houses of Parliament—though not the formal—it had excited the deep attention of more than one of the speakers.—EDITOR. Dec. 31, 1813.

LETTER XXI.

America.

SIR,

FEBRUARY 28, 1813.

THE exclusive, I had almost said, the personal, reference, which this second American contest bears to the character and interests of Great Britain, has peculiarly awakened us to a full consideration of the causes whence it arose,—the *time* at which we became involved in it,—the manner in which it has been prosecuted,—and the consequences to which it may lead.

The President, we have admitted, wished for war. It is not because the spirit which propelled him was insane, that we are, therefore, to fancy it less inveterate. Having once conceived a project subversive of the first principles of political economy, which assign to every age, of nations, as of man, its several attributes and powers—Mr. Madison, I am afraid, was proof against English reasoning. His plan for hurrying North America, by means of a gratuitous war with England, through the different stages of political life, until she should plough with one hand, and manufacture for herself with the other, was nearly on a par with the “perfectibility” scheme of Mr. Godwin. But if the illusion were not to be dispelled, the violence with which he pursued it might perhaps have been controlled—controlled through the medium of the

American people themselves, acted upon by British policy.—

Interesting, however, as this question might prove, and illustrative of some nicer points in political speculation, I shall henceforth hint at the origin of the war, more in its connexion with the genius of the English Cabinet, than in its faculty of contributing to any more especial development of the views entertained by America.

The debates in Parliament, on Thursday the 18th of February, were but preliminary, I trust, to a more ample examination of what may be properly termed the American question. The subject matter of those debates, viz. the address to the Prince Regent, was artfully confined by Ministers to the naked proposition, that England should “support his Royal Highness in the struggle,” without reference to the policy by which it had been produced, or to the persons by whom it was conducted. This expedient, whilst it precluded all difference of sentiment, was nothing better than a mere evasion of the controversy—and left the merits of Ministers precisely where they stood. The pledge indeed was so far cheerfully given—the more cheerfully, perhaps, by a great majority of both Houses, because—notwithstanding the cautious language in which it was drawn up—in spirit and substance it amounted to this—that all who bound themselves to a vigorous prosecution of the war, stood pledged by implication to a removal of the present Ministers.

What is the history of our negotiation with Ame-

rica since January, 1812;—Read it in its results. Did we employ the powers of diplomacy—to confirm our friends—or to convert our enemies?—Did we negotiate to gain time? To mature our preparations? To *strike a prodigious blow in Europe*, and terminate the Spanish war, before we drew down upon us the arms of another hemisphere? or To press upon Buonaparte in his hour of extremity, and throw his ruin in the teeth of this unnatural republic, as the prelude to her own? None of all these—for no such ends did we disgrace ourselves by the outrageous falsehoods to which we listened—and the compound insults which we endured.

Every day served only to assist the artifices and encourage the arrogance of Mr. Madison—to cool the partiality, or perplex the reasonings of our adherents:—every day was time gained, not for us, but against us—in selecting the season of predetermined rupture—in concerting and ripening the means of aggression. Over the deference of those who feared, and the attachment of those who would have served her, England equally let go her hold—by suppliant and pitiful remonstrance she betrayed her dignity:—by her theory of coercion, as in the Orders of Council, she alarmed her advocates—by its mutilated application, and low-minded surrender, she filled her enemies with contempt. Such was the peace of Lord Liverpool's Cabinet—What has been their warfare?

In vain shall we look for a solitary proceeding on the part of this country, characteristic of a state of

war—much less conducive to its speedy and honourable termination.

When the Admiralty were arraigned in the face of the House of Commons for having so shackled the instructions given to their commanders, or misdirected the force entrusted to them, that one naval campaign of three or four months had overwhelmed not the arms, but the councils, of Great Britain, with everlasting shame and dishonour—we were told by the Secretary of that ingenious Board—that so long ago as in May, 1812, dispatches were sent out to the senior officer, containing (conditionally) the well-known order, to sink, burn, and destroy.—A “good old English order,” quoth the Secretary! Aye, Sir, but acted upon, he might have added, in a good old Irish way—ships, to be sure, fine frigates too, were, it is certain, sunk and captured;—so the orders of the Admiralty were not only issued, but executed—executed by *American* officers! Now I am one of those vulgar persons who look to Government for something more than sage and discreet arrangements—one of those unreasonable beings, who demand something solid for their money. The old King of Prussia knew or cared very little about what is called an unfortunate officer—he piously conformed to the Scripture maxim, and estimated merits by their fruits—he admitted no proof to invalidate that, which taken on a large scale is perfectly unanswerable—that proof which arises out of the proportion between the success obtained by his servants, and the means at their disposal:—unlucky

measures, in the dialect of that sagacious Prince, were ever synonymous with unwise measures—unfortunate officers were unworthy officers—and as such were dismissed his service.—It is therefore a little problematical, how far we ought to suffer these arithmeticians of the Admiralty, to debit the nation with such fractions of cleverness as may perhaps lie scattered throughout their monthly distribution of our naval force, by way of a set-off against the sum total of calamity and disgrace with which we charge them. But I wave this advantage—and meet the men of office on their own grounds.

Let us therefore place their justification where they wish it to stand—on the principles (if they can be called so) which have governed their measures—instead of judging by the consequences which we impute to them.

When Lord Melville was taxed, on the same night in the House of Lords, with mal-administering—paralyzing—and to use a military phrase, *clubbing* the immense navy of Great Britain, so as to render our maritime greatness ridiculous in the eyes of all the world—what was his Lordship's apology? It is not now Mr. Croker who speaks—but it is Mr. Croker's doctrine, handled by the First Lord in person—the bishop, preaching on his chaplain's text.—And what says my Lord? Why,—he begins with stating, that “*there was an amply sufficient force,*” on the American station, when the war broke out! Amply sufficient! for what? for attack and destruction? No such thing. We shall hear by and by.—

“Would people,” says his Lordship, “have the ports blockaded *before* a declaration of war?”—No, I answer—as it was fairly answered at the time; but it was your duty to have, beforehand, a force sufficient to commence blockading the *moment* a war was declared. The “utmost that could be done,” says this vigorous High-Admiral, “was to protect our convoys with such a force, as should render the attacking them nearly a hopeless task.”—Good God! do we live to hear this language from him who impels and represents the naval power of Great Britain? Do we tamely endure to be told, that with 100 sail of the line at sea—with 250 frigates, and as many sloops of war—we can accomplish nothing more than the protection of a convoy, against a nation which possesses not so much as five effective frigates—but more than fifty defenceless towns upon her coast? Are such the principles which raised us to the rank we now abandon? Are we not only to wait with patience the attack in Canada—but to make Old Ocean blush for his allegiance to the British sceptre, by suffering each petty robber to invade our dominions with impunity? What nation can hesitate for half an hour, on the choice between peace and war with Britain, when she avowedly subjects her own maritime omnipotence to the same timorous, defensive maxims, which have hitherto formed the code of weakness and inferiority? Where is the consistency of those who strut about as champions for the inviolable right of impressment—when they render useless, to all its higher purposes, that

Navy for which alone the right of impressment is maintained? Of France, of America, it might be the proper boast, that they had *saved a convoy* from the British hunters :—but a confession of national humility so degrading to the Naval Minister of England—need only have been published a few months sooner, to have hastened in the same degree the declaration of war by America—and published, as it has been, what better can arise from it, than the certainty that she will spurn at every approach towards pacification?

If we adopt with Lord Melville this sober principle, and transfer to the powerful a rule of action fitted only to the weak, it must be acknowledged that his Lordship spoke truth when he declared, that the force allotted to the American station was not very insufficient before the breaking out of hostilities: nor was the First Lord of the Admiralty less fortunate in his own defence, than in the protection which he afforded to our convoys; when he solemnly thanked God for *inspiring him with wisdom!* to abstain from uttering a single syllable on the arrangement and distribution of the squadrons in North America—seeing that the faulty arrangement, and clumsy distribution of these squadrons, constituted literally the essence of the charge, brought against him by the Noble Lords, his opponents.

But this mighty armament,* which according to

* The force on the North American station, at the time when hostilities first broke out, consisted of the *Africa* of 64 guns—almost immediately brought home to England—rotten and unserviceable;—

Mr. Croker was provided with orders to "sink, burn, and destroy," yet from which my Lord Melville expected no more than a safe protection to the convoys, does not seem to have merited for a longer period than about two months, the description of being "amply sufficient" for what was required of it—even in the eyes of these partial Ministers. In the month of August Pelion was heaped upon Ossa. Sir John Warren goes out with another mighty armament—to reinforce that which was already all-sufficient. Here, at least, we might look for something like the din of war. Sir John Warren was sent, says the Secretary to the Board of Admiralty—"without any restrained or mitigatory orders"—and whatever use the Admiral made of his force, he alone had the blame or praise annexed to it. Pray was this, or was it not, that sort of ambiguous expression which would leave the public in no small degree of doubt, whether Government did not wish to throw the charge of inefficiency from their own shoulders, to those of the gallant Admiral? It would undoubtedly furnish some ground for consolation to ascertain, that the progress and occurrences of the American war were traceable not so

three or four 36-gun frigates, of which *two only were ready for sea*—and a few smaller vessels. Two 36-gun frigates, therefore, formed the bulk of that boasted armament, which received orders to destroy the American navy.

But has even Lord Melville's measure of duty been fulfilled? *Have the convoys been protected?* What do the underwriters answer to this? I forbear to press the irritable subject. Since "*America must follow the fate of Europe.*"—Dec. 31, 1813.

much to necessity, as to misconduct—otherwise, with, as we are told, abundant means, joined to a judicious direction of those means, the war, if it be fair to argue from events, is utterly and absolutely hopeless. We are assured by the Naval Secretary, that Sir John Warren had “no mitigatory orders.” Upon the official declarations of Mr. Croker, (who by the way is a gentleman of wit and talent,) we have already been gratified with Lord Melville’s commentary—My Lord Bathurst can supply us with another. What says the Secretary for the War Department, to this negative account of the gallant Admiral’s instructions? Lord Bathurst asserts, in so many words, that Sir John Warren “was ordered to *propose an armistice!!*” Pity that these speeches had not been rehearsed in the Cockpit. So much for the fact of the Noble Earl. But his Lordship is liberal; and has provided us with reasons likewise. This famous armistice, to be so proposed by an Admiral, sent out to check the martial novices of America, in the flush and pride of victory—was founded, it seems, on a provident apprehension, that “fresh causes of war might grow out of the prosecution of the war!”—Why this outsoars Lord Melville’s “convoys.”—Never, since fighting was first seen on earth, did such an absurdity enter the brain, or issue from the lips of a Statesman. America—wantonly, as the Noble Lord confesses, and in the true spirit of hatred and aggression—America goes to war with England. Concession on our part had uniformly led to encroachment on hers. The

cup of servility was drained to the bottom. Nothing was left but to fight it out; and to wrest from her fears, what we could not anticipate from her justice. Instead of overwhelming her wretched squadron—instead of blowing her towns about her ears—instead of making her feel experimentally, that nothing but folly could provoke a war, which nothing but ruin could attend—we confirm her wildest pretensions, and eradicate her most natural terrors, by an ardour for peace, and a languor in military operation, indicative of an humbled and conquered people—and pardonable in no other. It is of the essence of war that, while it exists at all, fresh causes of hostility—that is, fresh sentiments of animosity—should grow out of its very continuance. This doctrine of Lord Bathurst would go to the prohibition of self-defence—because to return a blow is to irritate the aggressor—but his Lordship ought to recollect, that amongst nations, as with individuals, it is frequent even to a proverb, to be “kicked for falling.”

Adverting, then, to the deeds of the Prince Regent's Ministers, in the course of this paltry quarrel with America, there is no object visible, but the family feature of incompetence, stamped long since on the whole of their career in Europe—but caricatured to an excess which none could have conceived—for it has exposed even the navy of England to derision. Far from guiding the events of war, they appear to have lost their senses under the shock of its commencement. In six long months, from

June to January, they have just recovered wind enough to hurl one State Paper at Mr. Madison's head—And what is the amount of this ostentatious document? Does it burn New York—or sink Mr. Rodgers? Oh no! It *makes a case* for England! On the 9th of January, and not before—the Cabinet find out that England has something to complain of! No wonder they were so unwilling to fight, while they were deliberating on the justice of their quarrel. Why, what a mockery is this! What guardians are these of the national honour! Must we reiterate to their indocile ears, that the offence with which they are accused, is not against America, but against Great Britain?—that they have suffered us to be bullied, defrauded, insulted, outraged, beaten, and depressed—and all without reparation? That the justice of our cause is no less clear than their incapacity—that its justice is the precise measure of those humiliations with which they have covered us—of those wrongs which it is not in lives like theirs to expiate? Hastily I conclude.

VETUS.

LETTER XXII.

America.

SIR, MARCH 23, 1813.

If I have ceased to address you for some weeks past, it is because there were none to hear me. Pollution and debauchery fill the air, once breathed by a virtuous people. Why should he approach the revels of the profligate, who will not partake of their licentiousness? Why taste or administer the brutalizing cup of Circe, when he already shudders at the transformation of all around him? *

To write for the entertainment, or indeed for the notice of the frivolous, the dissolute, or malicious, would be to confess myself of their number. With reluctance therefore, and unfeigned disgust, I glance at those revolting subjects, which have broken loose upon society, from the regions of ill-fame. Unless brought forward to satisfy the paramount ends of justice—not moral, but *legal* justice—he who first exposed them, or invited their exposure,—nay more—he who refused any compromise of selfish feeling

* Those distressing, shameful, and most unprincipled publications, affecting the character of various branches of the Royal Family, were about this time familiar to every eye. If the purpose had been to destroy the moral influence of the constitution upon the people, and on the other hand, to render persons of the highest rank desperate in their contempt for public opinion, the means employed were judiciously imagined.—Dec. 31, 1813.

—or they who basely shrunk from any sacrifice of office—by which this tremendous evil might have been checked—are worse foes to England than myriads of the race of Buonaparte. If the facts referred to, on either side, involve not the violation of some known law, their very notoriety is itself an offence, in its guilt and its consequences, as far beyond high treason, as the open rebel against the Kingly power falls short of him who treacherously undermines it. Who would compare the invader of a Crown, or the ravisher of a female, to him who darkly meditates against the rights and honour of both? What traitor like him who estranges a people from their Prince, and withers that loyalty by which alone the Sovereign can be defended, and the Commonwealth preserved from dissolution? It were vain to admonish a devoted Government of the poison which they have instilled into the blood of our remote posterity,—vain to adjure them by the moral charms which they have defiled, or the political safeguards on which they trample,—most vain, to remonstrate with wickedness or madness—the abandoned wickedness, or incurable madness, of those official patrons of public decency—those sworn trustees of our constitution and religion—grave professors of consistency!—self-branded renegadoes from innocence to persecution!—who have tolerated, if not encouraged, such atrocious pictures of the human character, as daily sicken the eye and haunt the imagination—exhibiting honour, virtue, and man-

hood, as mere names—justice, a courtier—and royalty a conspirator against itself.

But at this moment of degradation and disaster—of venom at home, and impotence abroad, I would beseech the people of England to consider, that if they have a Court to purify—they have also a country to protect. The British Empire (novel as it may seem) extends yet farther than from Blackheath to Carlton House. Matters of a more decorous curiosity—of a more universal interest—and, alas! of a deeper melancholy—are now transacting, or directly impending, than any which can be found within the limits of Court slander or intrigue. It is possible, therefore, that a great nation might be more wisely and more nobly occupied, than in the fruitless mischief of knocking at the Palace gates—to outrage every rule of public delicacy—without commanding domestic peace—without establishing one useful principle—without eradicating one vicious passion—where the wrong (if wrong there be) is of a nature, which it would call for new laws to redress—and the alleged offender of a rank, which it would subvert the Constitution to punish.

As the man who has lost his own esteem becomes callous to the opinion of the world—so the disgrace and infamy to which we are now familiarized at home, have deadened within us all sensibility to the footing on which we stand with distant nations. Life and treasure may be squandered in Spain, and yield no fruit but the necessity of squandering more. Europe

may blaze with patriotic fire around us, and kindle not a spark in the clay-cold English bosom. America—America! sullies the renown of Britain, but excites no vengeful emotion—America buffets the perishing Lion with impunity—America wounds the vitals of the Empire—but the mortified carcass feels no pain: with the audacious confidence of youth, this new and needless enemy—this spoiled and pampered minion of our doating rulers snatches the trident from their feeble grasp—replies with derision to their arguments—and pays their supplications with a scourge.

Ministers were charged with suffering themselves to be surprised by the declaration of war on the part of this Republic. Meeting the reproach with great show of indignation, they reduced themselves to an alternative of which their wisdom was not aware. Either they expected hostilities—or they did not. If they were really surprised into a rupture—they were grossly ignorant of the relation in which the country they governed stood towards those foreign powers, with which it most imported the wealth and honour of England, that such relations should be clearly ascertained—that is to say, they were wholly unfit to carry on the most direct negotiation with that Power, whose interests, as involved with those of England, were eminently free from the admixture of foreign and complicated subjects; in other words, they were quite incompetent to the meanest functions of public Ministers, neither capable of main-

taining a peaceful intercourse, nor able to foresee its termination.

From the moment, indeed, at which the present Cabinet was formed, every wise man amongst us foreboded a war; not because the rights of England would be upheld with spirit, but because in contempt of those rights and of their official guardians, America might arm with safety.

But in resisting the accusation of "being taken by surprise," Ministers put in their claim not only to such a degree of foresight as qualified them generally to predict a state of war—the very nature of their defence amounted to this; that they were apprised of the period at which it would break out—of the grounds on which it would rest—and of the conditions on which it might be avoided. Coupled with their expectation of hostility, we have on record, early in 1812, the fierce and terrifying avowal of these heroes, that "they must support the Orders in Council at all hazards." If there be any meaning in such manifestoes, it is this—"We are closely pressed by Mr. Madison to revoke the Orders in Council, but these orders are so essential to Great Britain, that rather than yield them we are ready to abide the worst consequences of an American war." Well then—the season advances—war is declared—that war, let us remember, whose arrival Ministers had anticipated! What becomes of the Orders in Council, for whose sake this fatal extremity was brought down upon the English nation? They,

to be sure, are placed high amongst the archives of the land—consecrated by the affections of their advocates, and worshipped as so many Palladia of our being! I am mistaken—the Orders in Council are repealed. They who now boast of their readiness to fight—and of their profound acquaintance with the secrets of America, which assured them of a speedy necessity for fighting,—they staunchly hold fast the grounds of war, until *just too late* to avert its calamities. This is not my own view of the influence of the Orders in Council—it is the view of Ministers—of Lord Castlereagh himself,—who so truly regarded them as the chief topics of dispute, that he founded on their revocation, however tardy, a confident belief in the immediate suspension of hostilities. The Orders in Council were of no languid or neutral character. If they were fit to be abandoned, why so long enforced? If fit to be preserved, why so suddenly and fruitlessly rescinded? Rescinded, under the gross and degrading imputation, that Ministers had maintained, in contempt of justice, what they yielded only to the fear of a dismissal,—and that selfish clamour out of doors, and a gathering majority within, had prevailed upon the spirit of a sordid Administration, to make a burnt-offering of those idols, otherwise to be protected at no meaner price, than that of a sanguinary and consuming struggle with America.

I have already noticed the confession of our Ministers, that the American Government enjoyed, through their voluntary permission, the privilege of

choosing the precise moment of a rupture. To men who reasoned by ordinary rules, this acknowledgment would decide the point at issue: but when it constitutes the essence of their plea, on behalf of the manifest imbecility of all our measures—that America might “select her own time”—and that she would not fail to render the choice of it “as injurious as possible to this country,”—what shall we think of the fidelity with which our interests have been consulted, when such an advantage was given up to an unfriendly power, instead of being secured for us? How are we to rate their judgment or their modesty, who urge *in extenuation* of their own unripe armaments, the very grave offence with which they stand accused—the very criminal complaisance which enabled their enemy to outstrip them?—And this at the moment—and in the same breath—in which they declare, that the contest with America did *not* come upon them by surprise! that they had a perfect foreknowledge of the enemy’s designs—and *were* adequately prepared to resist them! Truly, Sir, the dexterity of some people in argument, is equal to their energy in war. It is not merely that in the *Materia Medica* of this Cabinet, blunders like poisons, serve to neutralise each other—but it is as if a legal practitioner from Newgate were by pleading a felony, to get rid of a trial for misdemeanour. Poor John Bull is readily imposed upon, his Royal Master too, is easily pleased. But the President, it seems, had put a construction on the face and progress of our Ministerial preparations, not quite so favourable

to their vigour. In the letter of the American Secretary of State to Mr. Russel, bearing date Aug. 21, 1812, it is officially enumerated amongst the reasons for rejecting the armistice proposed by Sir G. Prevost, that “it would leave Great Britain at liberty, and *“give her time to augment her forces”* in the neighbourhood of the Republican territory. Here then we have a practical comment, which places the question in rather a laughable point of view. The British Government, vaunting of their strength, offer an armistice, as a proof of their magnanimity. No, says the crusty Mr. Madison, it is an evidence only of your tardiness and your weakness, and please God we shall fight it out. Now, Mr. Madison, like other great men, might be thought insincere in this belief, but that unfortunately he acted on the truth of it. If, however, his assertion were true, his expectation has been undoubtedly erroneous; for since the rejection of the armistice in August last, not one regiment has arrived to reinforce our troops, or defend our possessions in Canada.

Suppose we take the other side of the dilemma—and agree that Ministers had intelligence, of what it required but little secret intelligence to divine—does it in any way mend their condition? What use have they made of time, force, and opportunity, thus, by their own account, at their disposal? Between ignorance and negligence, where is their refuge? Is the abuse of knowledge less criminal than the want of it? Where are the preparations of which they boast? Where the fruit of those preparations? Armed

packets are sent out, freighted with instructions, by which ships of war are gravely authorised—to sink or capture their enemy, *when attacked!!* Strenuous, vigorous, high-toned order; worthy the shade of Chatham to inspire, and the ghost of Nelson to execute. But these are not the only specimens of Ministerial spirit. While the British cruisers are few and feeble, they receive permission to fight; when a competent force arrives, it is ordered forthwith to negotiate. What, if the flag of the United States wave in triumph over the seas of either hemisphere? What, if the only trophies of the war be wrenched by a squadron of five frigates from a fleet of more than five hundred sail? What, if the scheme of the lofty minded Melville for breaking down the majesty of the English navy, into an humble attendant upon trade, have proved to be an unprofitable, as it was a pitiable, ambition? the privateers having feasted on the wealth of England, while the men-of-war possessed themselves of her glory? What, if the capture of a British 38-gun frigate be distinctly ascribed by a Court-martial on their oaths, to the defective condition in which she was sent out by the Admiralty! Be the accusation specific or general, a detail of circumstance, or a mass of misfortune, we are told for our benefit, that “the Admiral had orders to fight;” that “the management of the fleet was left to the Admiral;” and moreover, that “there are fifty large frigates on the stocks.” The gallantry of the Officers who, with anguish, struck the British flag, is beyond all ques-

tion, and above all praise ; and the loss of life on board the British ships has been *as five to one of that sustained by the enemy*. What is this but an aggravation of our sorrow ?

If the Admiral, as was more than insinuated in Parliament, has betrayed a want of skill in enforcing his instructions, or in the arrangement of his fleet, why has he met only with a passing censure ? What is it to this abused and indignant people, what branch of the Executive Government ought to be visited with public vengeance ? Who employed the Admiral ? Nay, shall we long forbear to ask, who employs the Employers of that Admiral ? Under whose leaden finger is it, that the buoyant glories of England have sunk into bottomless humiliation ? That her army has the toils without the fruits of victory ? That her commerce is swept from the parental bosom of the waters, and her invincible navy fights only to be subdued ?

From the Protectorate of Cromwell, to the reign of George the Third, Great Britain had struggled for, and finally enjoyed the absolute sovereignty of the ocean. Under the Cabinet of Lords Eldon, Liverpool, and Bathurst, the battle which had ceased in the old world, has been rekindled in the new. Commercial enterprise, and a maritime population, were formidable attributes of the United States ; to these, by the providence of the Noble Lords, the pride of victory has been added ; raising and re-animating the prostrate spirit of Europe, in emulation of the masculine genius of the West,

Is it the answer of a rational being, when rebuked for the loss of our ships, and our far more inestimable character, that, indeed the *classes* of the British fleet do not correspond with the American; the seventy-fours being unfit to overtake their ships, and the frigates unable to resist them? *Why*, from amongst a gross number of more than a thousand British men-of-war, have none been adapted to the possible contingency—for two years past the evident probability—within the last twelve months, the acknowledged certainty, of a war with the people of America? From an intercourse so extended, as England maintains with every nation of the earth, is the apprehension too chimerical, that with any, or with all of them, we may sometimes have to enforce the acknowledgment of a right, or the reparation of an injury? Is it too unreasonable to ask of those public servants, so profusely trusted with materials and with money, that they should at all times be able to furnish an armament suitable to the exigency, in its nature, no less than its amount? Is it not of especial importance, that we should eye with watchful jealousy the movements of an adventurous and rising people, that we should measure correctly their means of annoying us, and when they have little hope from any other source, leave them none in the peculiarity of their weapons?

This naval question is of inconceivable magnitude to us, to our children, and to the world. It admits no novelty of argument; the facts are few, though fatal. If I have but repeated old observations, it is

because they are such as cannot be repeated too often, on a subject which cannot be too often discussed. The language of common sense and strong feeling is unchangeable. If the disasters of the maritime war provoke neither censure nor inquiry from Parliament, there are other bodies besides the Cabinet, who will have betrayed their most sacred duty. Even should they who are accused be innocent, the sense as well as the safety of the empire demands, that on a matter which concerns her existence, the causes which endanger it should be made clear.

It is worth observing how this contest with America has deceived the calculations of either party. England was persuaded, that within three months she would annihilate the marine of her antagonist. In as many weeks the Republicans reckoned that Canada would be their own. Why is it, that where England was all powerful, she has been disgraced—that where comparatively weak, she has, for a time, succeeded? Is it that Ministers of all men are entitled to balance the loss of our maritime supremacy, by the wisdom with which they have defended the Canadian frontier? Is Canada unquestionably safe? The bad success of the British fleet arises from its maladministration. The early failures of the American troops are owing to their faulty composition. Can any person be silly enough to believe that the constant repulse of thousands of Americans by a few hundreds of English soldiers, is imputable solely to the native superiority of the Englishman over the

Yankee? The independence acquired by the United States, and the naval prowess which they have now exhibited, may bring such dreamers to their senses. The difference is in the system, not in the men. The defeats sustained by the invaders of our Canadian provinces, are not inflicted merely by the Briton upon the American. They are victories of a regular army over a militia—of experienced officers and disciplined soldiers, over an enemy neither disciplined nor conducted well—without subordination—without cohesion—slightly acquainted with the principles of war—and new to military habits. The disasters which have befallen the American forces have mainly resulted from a long peace, from the distance of the great theatre of hostilities in Europe,—from the devotion of an infant people to agriculture, or to commerce,—and from the jealousy of a free people towards a regular military force. We trace, therefore, the defeats of the enemy to circumstances in his condition wholly foreign to the merits of the Executive Government. We trace his astonishing successes to a cause still more astonishing, the existence of such a Government as the present in Great Britain. Nor must we flatter ourselves with the delusive hope, that the elements of this military weakness in America are not susceptible of change, or that the fortune of our gallant army on the frontier will be permanent, as it has hitherto been brilliant. The Americans have already adopted measures, calculated to remove the actual evils of their system. They have authorised their Administration to raise and

embody regular troops—to march the militia beyond the States for which they serve—and to enforce a more vigorous and wholesome discipline. When these measures shall have been brought into effective play—when Canada, garrisoned by an army, shall be invaded by a more numerous *army*—then, and not before, will the contest for our Colonies begin. Should the same timid, helpless hands, still palsy the action of this empire—should the same vile and cringing policy yet harrow up the enterprise, and baffle the resolution of our tars, it will prove that while the Americans have wisdom to repair their errors,—we have not heart to face the living sources of our own. Bad as we are, our cause will regularly decline; gay and hopeful as the scene has opened upon America, it will rapidly improve and brighten.

Nor can the retrocession of our naval warfare fail to extend its disastrous influence far beyond the limits of the fleet. Canada, exposed to the whole body of the United States, and once attacked by a force well organised, can be preserved to England only by maritime diversions. Well-concerted, frequent, and powerful expeditions along the sea-coast of the enemy, would compel him to withdraw from these offensive projects, and waste his resources in preparation for his own security. What hope, or prospect, can we cherish, that by such an Administration any such vigour will be displayed? Why talk of opportunity to those for whom it never exists?

Why recommend bold and decisive deeds to him who goes down to posterity, labelled with his own proposition, that, by shortening the period of a contest, you diminish the faculty of supporting it, and aggravate its evils to the society by whom it is borne? This war, which has begun with the loss of character, must—(should the present Cabinet remain in office,) inevitably terminate in the loss of substantial power. All that remains to England of her dominions in North America, is now the stake and field of an unequal battle. It is not my duty to examine the operation of a conquest like that of Canada, upon the internal balances of the Federal Republic. How far it might help to attenuate and exhaust an Executive authority already too feeble for its proper functions, or to what pitch it might inflame those reciprocal jealousies, which embitter and distract the several Members of the Union, are points more immediately affecting a foreign community than ourselves. Canada may be estimable in the eye of an American, for no other purposes than those of traffic. Furs and ship-timber may to him be its only charms. Even for these, it is to us a solid and most valuable acquisition. But its moral properties are above all price. Incorporated with the realm of England, this conquest stands an eternal record of her greatness. Torn from the flower of European chivalry—the gallant and immemorial rivals of the English name, shall it then, sink into the arms of those, who, speaking of them as a nation, deem nothing illus-

trious but gold,—who abdicate their origin—cast off the sway of their progenitors, with their virtues,—and ceasing to be our children—are nothing? Not to purchase the dissolution of their sordid and turbulent democracy, would I part with an inch of this interesting province,—so fairly won,—so proudly kept, amidst the wreck of our colonial inheritance. Not to those parricides who have invaded the hoary honours of our flag—would I yield a yet more damning proof of British degeneracy. Let those Ministers who have discharged the sea from its allegiance, and laid for the naval power of England the foundation of its ruin—proceed still onward in their immortal course. Let such men, after destroying a navy, which it cost two hundred years to mature, now sacrifice that possession out of which a new navy might be created,—a possession sacred to the patriot and the hero—the bequest of Chatham—the holy shrine of Wolfe.

From the despair with which Ministers overwhelm us, when we meditate on the occurrences of the war, what relief do they afford us, by the operations of their policy? Openly beaten by this puissant enemy, what means have they taken to circumvent him? In the transition from their physical weakness to their wisdom, we need not dwell much upon the diverting list of what they call “war-measures.” We already know enough of the Orders in Council—how they were upheld to ruin France—and revoked, I presume, for the sake of demolishing America. We have

heard something likewise of Sir John Warren's armistice—which, as it was described by Mr. Croker, to be *not* of a “mitigatory” kind—may perhaps bear a place among machinations of the most terrible order. In the long State Paper of January 9, came a third engine of destruction—and a heavy battery it was—only that, after telling us how ill we had been used by America, the obvious question was in every body's mouth, “why so good a cause had not been more strenuously supported?”—“Why, we did nothing *but* complain?” All this, it seems, was found insufficient—the Republicans continued to preach at Ministers—to flog our cruizers, and to smash our merchants. So we hit, at last, upon a fourth expedient—and betook ourselves to blockade their ports. Now a blockade was in itself so simple and so wise a measure, that it threw these Machiavels into dire perplexity before they contrived to spoil it—spoil it, however, they effectually did. Philadelphia, New York, the Chesapeake, the Delaware, and all to the southward, have been strictly blockaded—North and Eastward of New York, the whole coast is exempt. Thus, say the wiseacres about the Treasury—“We lay the burthen of the war upon our enemies, thus shall we cultivate an amicable spirit in the people of New England, &c. &c., and lead them at length to desire a separate pacification.” Of these fancies in their order—

1st. The Southern States, under the blockading system, can be injured only by the interruption of

their export. Now, easy as it may be for our squadrons to obstruct the occasional passage of the superior class of merchant vessels from any blockaded port, it is wholly impossible to destroy, or even to check the passage of small coasters close in shore; whence it follows, that if the blockade of the enemy's harbours be *partial* only, the goods of the merchants resident in places subject to that blockade will find an easy transit, by means of small craft, to places exempted from its rigour. The only difference felt by the grower of tobacco in Virginia,—and of rice in Carolina,—will be in the extra expense of carriage to some port northward of New York; and even that will be afterwards reimbursed from the pocket of the foreign consumer.

2d. The Eastern States have long been, to a great degree, carriers for those of the West and South. This advantage is continued to them by our Ministers,—and other extraordinary benefits are superadded. The non-blockaded ports must now enjoy the additional profits on warehousing, agency, commission, &c. &c. with all the other happy characteristics of an entrepôt, which each of them will inevitably become, for the whole trade between the United States and the rest of the world. Is this to make the men of Boston weary of the war? Is this to encourage their solicitude for a separate pacification? When Mr. Madison manifested a strong disposition to enter into hostilities with Great Britain, what was the language of these New England States? You, Virginians,—with the President at your head,

—you are plunging us in ruin;—we live by commerce,—you are comparatively independent of it. Our whole coast, with its cities and inhabitants, is, like New York itself, at the mercy of the enemy;—you, with a few exceptions, are safe. If, therefore, you take this unjust and cruel measure,—the whole of whose dreadful consequences we alone are to bear,—we shall feel strongly tempted, on the first experience of calamity, to withdraw ourselves from your Government, and make separate terms with a foe whom we are unable to resist. Such is a true picture of the feelings of that Northern population. How have the English Ministers accommodated their actions to a case like this?—Why, they have destroyed the force of the only argument urged by these lovers of peace with Britain;—they have made the war an instrument for improving their condition—for multiplying their commercial profits—for giving them an ascendancy over the Southern States—for facilitating the depredations of their privateers. Why, this is a bounty upon the cultivation of a war-like temper in these *friends* of England. This is the conversion of an amicable into an hostile spirit,—and a bribe for the acquiescence of the Maritime States in the mischievous policy of Mr. Madison. The *Constitution*, which destroyed two of our finest frigates, sails in and out of Boston, and triumphs in our humiliation undisturbed;—and this is to conciliate,—and to dissolve the Federal Republic!

To comment on such insanity would be foolish,—to follow these creatures through the involutions

and obliquities of their peace,—their war,—their blunders in both,—would require the clue of an intellect equal to their own. The people and the Parliament of the present day may possibly rest satisfied with their performances, and leave posterity to endure the weight of their wisdom, as well as their taxation.

VETUS.

PHILOVETUS.*

America.

SIR,

APRIL 3, 1813.

THE discussions on the war with America having yielded for a moment, to those which affect more immediately the opposite quarter of the globe, it may not be desirable, under the present appropriation of the public feeling, to follow the American question to a greater extent, than that to which it has been recently pushed by your correspondent VERUS. In the mean time we may consider it as something gained, if a subject of such deep and lasting importance be left in a state favourable to the resumption of it at a future day. It cannot fail to repay our trouble,

* This Letter—which though under a different signature, VERUS does not disavow—contains a summary of his foregoing sentiments on the origin and character of a war between Great Britain and America. The affairs of Europe, and the prospects of the great cause of empires and nations then at stake between the Oder and the Rhine, began to usurp an entire ascendancy over the public feeling—and to press upon the Author with their full weight. Ill health and other circumstances delayed his approach to these grand subjects, and rendered his discussion of them both in plan and execution more imperfect than he had wished and designed. It may indeed be long before the season arrives, at which we can take a steady and comprehensive survey of the condition of Europe. The changes wrought within the last six months must have some permanency before we can feel then to be real—the scene must be tranquil to admit of our discerning accurately its features, and of judging the sort of whole which they compose. December 31, 1813.

if, by placing a species of landmark on the spot, we determine how far the rubbish has been already cleared away, and fix the point whence inquiry may commence hereafter. You will, therefore, permit me to recapitulate, though briefly, some observations and reasonings of the above named political writer; persuaded, as I am, that they cannot be too firmly impressed upon the minds of the people of England.

VERUS appears to have justified his own opinion, that if the American Government were impenetrable to argument—beyond the influence of negotiation—and intent on war—the people of America were still to be acted upon, through the joint or separate medium of their interests and their apprehensions.

It appears, that, about the close of 1811, Marquess Wellesley, Foreign Minister for Great Britain, recorded by his dispatches, and still more by his personal conduct, the strong conviction he felt, that it was no longer useful to negotiate on the old grounds—and that prompt recourse should be had to more direct conciliation: or seasonable provision made, for an appeal to arms;—

That the Cabinet neglected both—making no subsequent advance towards amity—no progress in negotiation—no preparative for an immediate rupture—failing to prepossess the public mind of England by a timely disclosure to Parliament—failing to operate upon the American Ministers, through the omnipotent agency of their own people—but leaving both to the combined operation of incendiaries, speculators, intriguers, and State empirics;—

That a Minister, gifted with boldness and wis-

dom, would have engaged the friendly feelings of America, by a frank and seasonable modification or repeal of the Orders in Council—as he would have tamed her hostile feelings, by an early development of military or naval force;—whereas the Ministers of whom I speak, inflamed the animosity of a coarse and irritable nation, by a stubborn adherence to coercive measures, afterwards withdrawn through mere compulsion—whilst by languid and feeble armaments they compromised the dignity of Great Britain—and taught her enemies, that as there was little to hope from her justice, there was less to apprehend from her power;—

That the mode in which the war has been conducted superadds disgrace and ruin to the impolicy through which it was commenced—the gross mismanagement of our naval force having exposed our ships of war to capture by a feeble enemy—lowered the proud character of the British navy—and transferred its spirit of enterprize—its conscious strength—and unstained laurels—to a maritime people never before numbered amongst the nations of the world—rendering them not only fearful rivals to Great Britain—but promising examples to the prostrate marine of Europe;—

That in a war with nations of a mixed character like that of America, the main policy of England should be to depress and weaken those peculiar branches of their power, which were most capable of being converted into future instruments of annoyance to this scattered and commercial empire;—

That if, therefore, a relaxation of our efforts

were excusable in any quarter, it was where land forces only could be brought into action, since from those of America, comparatively speaking, Great Britain has little to fear—and if strenuous and unre-mitted effort could be desirable for any purpose, it would be for the extinction of her naval power, being that weapon through which alone she can essentially impair the greatness and prosperity of the English nation : but, it appears, that Ministers have reversed this rule—obtaining a trivial and temporary success upon the frontier of Canada, which might be best defended within the walls of Quebec—while they have entailed upon us reiterated disgrace and disaster, where disgrace is new, and disaster fatal ;—that is to say—the petty, though brave repulses which our troops have inflicted, are barren of all advantage, or profitable, as lessons, to the enemy alone—whereas our defeats are so constituted, as to be prolific of evil—creating and reviving an endless brood of enemies, calamities, and perils ;—

That the people of the southern States of America were most active in exciting the war with England, and those of the Northern and Eastern States most interested and earnest in their wishes to avert it ;—

That on this contrariety of interest and policy, manifested also in other cases, rational prospects had arisen of a total rupture and final separation between the two great branches of the American Republic ;—

That as the people of the Southern States, composing the mass of the agricultural interest, are withdrawn in some measure from the direct influence of

British power, except in so far as regards certain towns upon their coast, the chief and steady aim of the policy of England should be directed towards the inhabitants of the North—who are her partners in commerce—her equals in enterprize—and if, judiciously handled, at her mercy in war;—

That to confirm their love of peace with this country, by rendering peace the channel of conveying to them every practicable benefit—and to increase their terror of an English war, by visiting upon them the full measure of its legitimate evils—would be within the true spirit of English wisdom, as adapted to a state of friendship or of hostility with that people;—

That our Ministers have preferred the very opposite system, by coercing them in peace—and sparing them since the commencement of hostilities—thereby making the friendship of England a source of distress—and a rupture with her the means of aggrandizement and advantage;—for, whereas the mercantile interest in the Northern States of America had all along represented to their Government the cruel tyranny of plunging them into a quarrel with a mighty foe, from whose force and vengeance it was utterly unable to protect them—and whereas they had foretold that their infant navy would be overthrown—their commerce ruined—and their most flourishing cities laid in ashes,—and that the experience of such a train of disasters must compel them to a separate peace with Great Britain—and a separate Government for themselves,—our Ministers have so

managed the naval power of this country, as to answer practically all these arguments—and to falsify these forebodings—by an exemption of the Northern ports from blockades and interdictions, rendered applicable to all the others,—by encouraging their maritime hostility—and promoting their commerce, at the expense of all their neighbours,—thus conferring on them during war, the two-fold benefits of peace and war,—and converting those who were friends to England from a natural necessity, into enemies made resolute by interest, emulation, and glory. This is to perpetuate a quarrel, which we ought to have avoided,—and to consolidate the federal union, which we might otherwise have dissolved;—

That a contest with America, conducted as it might be, would eminently display the soundness of the maxim, that offensive measures are beyond all others conducive to our own preservation. A great maritime Power has invariably the prerogative of choosing the field of battle. By well judged menaces of invasion; by a cheap and easy movement of her fleet; she may fulfil the ends of mighty armies; and consume or occupy the whole of the enemy's force. Had a few demonstrations been made along the coast, the Canadian frontier would have remained unmolested, and the Americans at this hour insensible to the necessity for reforming their Military System;—

But it is not in relation to America alone that our measures ought to have been framed, or that they

have been open to reprehension. We ought to have instituted a Blockade not only more adequate in its extent, but more seasonable in its origin. We ought to have sealed up the harbours of America at a time when it would have injured no Power but America; whereas, with the usual craft of Ministers, they have postponed their Blockade until it wears the semblance of being directed against the trade of the European Powers, just liberated from Bounaparte, and restored to an intercourse with America, and with Great Britain. It is indeed consistent, that as we had no share in their liberation, we ought to render it as little beneficial to them as we can.

I will not trouble you farther upon these irksome topics, but leave them to the rumination of your readers.

PHILOVETUS.

LETTER XXIII.

Policy of Buonaparte.

SIR,

MAY 18, 1813.

NOTHING can exhibit in a stronger light the influence ascribed to the war in Germany, on the universal welfare of the civilized world, than the degree to which the English nation are now carried away by its vicissitudes. The Catholic question and that of India, embracing two subjects of the highest rank, as touching not only the principles of legislation, but the paramount interests, the most vehement passions, and most irritable parties of the State, have been placed conspicuously before the public eye—and remain there—slighted, or forgotten. It is no symptom of ordinary times, when we consider, as but a second-rate problem, how best to preserve the possessions of the Empire abroad, or its tranquillity at home. Yet have the people made a judicious estimate, in the preference which they afford to the continental war, above all matters of domestic solicitude. It plainly looks as if the question would be solved among our German kindred, how soon the religious liberality of England may become fruitless, and how long her Asiatic provinces may be safe. The roar of battle on the Elbe may speedily reverberate to the Indus. The beam by which are poised the swords of Alexander and Na-

poison, already tries the fate of Ireland, and trembles with the fortunes of the Thames. Amidst the shifting occurrences of a campaign, we can seldom find any single event, or given period in its progress, on which it would be wise to rest a body of observations, as to its general character, or prospective consequences. It is not my design to take the battle of Lutzen, or the transactions which recently preceded it, for my text. In passing, however, let me hint, that unless there should follow the most extravagant misconduct on the part of the Allies, nothing appears on the face of that gallant contest, which ought not to be a theme of high exultation. Wishing to withdraw your attention at once from these immediate objects, and to fix it on the sum of things, I shall so far only be borne away by the stream of popular feeling as to remark—

1. That the Russian army, by the death of Kutusoff, has fallen (if the accounts be true), or risen, we ought to say, under the command of Witgenstein—in himself an army.

2. That the Prussian troops, on a comparison of their present conduct, with their behaviour at Jena, appear hardly to belong to the same nation.

3. That the allied army, certainly not exceeding 100,000, were not beaten by an army composed altogether of native French, under the command of Buonaparte himself, and amounting certainly to not less, in the field, than 150,000 men.

4. That Buonaparte by his own account was utterly abandoned.

terly deceived as to the quarter in which he had prepared for battle; inasmuch as when he had determined to commence by throwing forward his left upon Leipsic—thus getting between the Allies and the Elbe, and cutting the Prussians off from Berlin—he found his own center attacked and overwhelmed,—and was forced to terminate by advancing his right—and leaving the Allies masters of the direction in which they would retire.

5. That the manifest exaggeration of the allied force which runs through the whole of the French statement, leads to some inferences of considerable weight;—namely, that he found an apology necessary for the issue of the battle,—for the tardiness of his own advance,—and for the difficulties which he felt would await his future progress.

6. It must be confessed that he possesses the course of the Elbe, on which the three towns of Magdeburg, Torgau, and Wittenburgh are seated:—the relief of these powerful fortresses, composing the entire of *his first line*, may be regarded as equivalent to a victory.

7. We must likewise acknowledge, that Hamburgh and the lower Elbe are now at his disposal—and it will come home to some amongst us hereafter, as a reflection full of humiliation and remorse, that the defence of that valuable city and of the neighbouring coast had devolved as a duty of sacred and peculiar import, on those by whom hitherto all their obligations as members of a great military league, have been grossly, meanly, and shamefully abandoned.

Let us now revert to more distant periods—and see if history will prove to us the fountain of instruction.

In the beginning of the year 1812, the affairs of Europe had arrived at a crisis of singular importance.

The peace of Vienna, with the Austrian matrimonial alliance, had given Buonaparte and his predatory empire, a station amongst the proudest of the ancient monarchies. By the Conscript-laws, the solid system of French destruction, as by the Property-tax of England, her solid system of finance, was matured and finished—the nation feeding from its own vitals, the fire which consumed it. The darling scheme of the first revolutionary projectors, had also been realised by Napoleon ; and the edifice reared in subtlety, whose foundations were laid in force. Auxiliary despotisms were erected on all sides, as outworks to the vast fortress which they enveloped. Bavaria, Saxony, Wurtemburgh, Westphalia, were ordained to exercise the functions delineated by Mr. Burke ; and to act alternately as “claws and feelers” to their parent. Holland was already devoured ;—Prussia, under the process of mastication ; the league of the Rhine compounded and bedecked from the fragments of the German Empire. Thus complete—the planet and her satellites—it was an awful expectation what course they would describe,—what motions they were destined to perform.

By the unprofitable and infamous, though long expected annexation of the Hanse Towns, the direct

assumption of territory on the part of France, seemed, in the North of Europe, to have reached its limits. The richest fruits of Sovereign power were enjoyed by Napoleon, while he saved its most ordinary expenses, from the mouth of the Elbe, to the source of the Niemen. Nothing on this side of the Russian Empire obstructed his views, or alarmed his jealousy;—for the army of Prussia, which in 1811 had amounted to 120,000 men, had the same year, on the mandate of St. Marsin, been reduced to less than a third of that number.

Amongst the motives of the French Emperor for this attack, upon a distant, strong, and unoffending Power, some will perhaps remain impenetrable; but there are others on which we may presume to reason, because they arise out of the nature of things.

Some persons have enumerated amongst the incentives to this war, the failure of the French interposition to arrest the progress of the Russian arms against Turkey, whose existence was menaced to such a degree, as might have excluded Buonaparte from his meditated portion of the spoil. Such a circumstance could have but an imaginary, or at most a very slight operation. The unjust attempt of Alexander upon the Turkish dominions, was permitted and encouraged by the framer of the treaty of Tilsit, as a coarse (though plausible) snare to divert the attention, and waste the means of Russia. France well knew that she could interrupt that aggression when she pleased; and the proof that a vigorous remonstrance by her Ambassador would

have been decisive, rests upon the recorded fact, that Russia did hasten a losing treaty with the Ottomans, in contemplation of her dangers from Buonaparte.

—But if not to prohibit, was it to perpetrate the crime of unhallowed conquest, that this *descendant* of the mighty Charlemagne disturbed and shook the Scythian deserts? If the simple addition of territory to France were his hope, intervening kingdoms presented acquisitions more alluring and more defensible than any beneath the sceptre of the Czars. Caution alone, if not taste or avarice, would have induced him to appropriate and settle, as French departments, those of the Upper Elbe, the Oder, and the Vistula, before he ventured to found a permanent Empire amidst the golden fields of Archangel, or the balmy zephyrs of the Neva. The natives of Russia are no less immoveable in their loyalty, than the Hindoos are in their religion. They must not only be subdued, but governed, by absolute force. Commerce, too, is essential to the finances of Northern States. Stripped, then, of its trade, and burthened with an army of foreigners, what Russian province would defray the expense of its Administration? Yet a conquest by Buonaparte implies, that the Continental System would be unrelentingly maintained,—and that the controul of French troops must be perpetually exercised, nearly two thousand miles from home, over forty millions of a proud and warlike nation, re-inforced by the sympathies of twenty millions of Germans.

It appears, therefore, but fair to argue, that the dismemberment of Russia proper, even if attainable, constituted no immediate object of the late aggression. That the detachment of Polish Russia was not the *single* object, we have the testimony,—1st, of the system of defence—2dly, of the system of invasion. Had Poland been the only subject of dispute, the movements and exertions of the Russian armies would have been calculated for the defence of Poland;—whereas the first line of resistance prepared by Alexander was deliberately established on the eastern bank of the Dwina—a station well chosen for the security either of Moscow or Petersburg—but having no more reference to that of the Polish provinces, than an army posted on the river Tweed, would bear to the protection of London, from an enemy landed in Sussex.

A proof still stronger may be deduced from Buonaparte himself, that the countries contained between the Niemen and the Dwina were deemed insufficient for his purposes—either to satisfy the views with which he framed this enterprise—or to indemnify the labour which it cost him. In two days' march from the opening of the campaign, he broke the whole line of the Russian army, and cut off the communication between its co-operating parts. After three weeks' operation he reigned in Wilna, and dispatched his orders to both extremities of Poland. His abode for a few days at the capital of Lithuania was here held forth as an indication of his distresses; and as equivalent to an utter defeat. But while this

suspension of his course was regarded by others with exultation—VETUS * beheld it with anxiety and terror. To him no prospect seemed more pregnant with dismay, than that the Invader should “possess so much wisdom and self-command, as to curb, rather than to push, his winged fortunes—and to temper his actions within their present bounds;”—that a being whom Providence had lifted up to perish, amidst roaring whirlwinds and electric fires, should awake to the wild elevation of his flight—descend at once into the sphere of regular action—calm the fierce throbbings of his own disordered soul—and pluck the innate canker from his destiny. Had but one spark of discretion appertained to this lofty and licentious spirit, the fate of Europe might eventually have followed that of Poland, and have rested in the hands of Buonaparte. My fears of his prudence were happily disappointed; as were the hopes entertained by more sanguine speculators, of his premature embarrassment and defeat. These, indeed, were frustrated only that better hopes might be fulfilled. The ease and rapidity with which the French forces obtained possession of Poland, were unprecedented in the annals of their leader; the faulty distribution of the Russian army having laid it open to a movement on the part of the enemy, which was conceived and executed with the highest display of promptitude, accuracy, and vi-

* Vid. Letter 9,—written while Buonaparte was said to be advancing from Wilna upon the Dwina, dated Aug. 9, 1812.

gour. The Poles flocked to the standard of France. Had the passions of Buonaparte been less inflamed, or his judgment well exercised upon the East of Europe, he must have regarded this new acquisition as the cheapest and most valuable that he ever had achieved,—too remote for a conquest, but even by its remoteness more secure to him as a dependant—which he had gained without blood, and might preserve without money. But if Napoleon were not to be deterred by common difficulties, neither was he to be satisfied with reasonable success. He is fitly described as belonging to “an order of minds, that “by nature make for themselves great reverses.”* On this occasion he abused his prosperous fortune; and the chastisement which he provoked has few examples in history.

Since, then, the separtion of Poland from Russia was in the eye of Buonaparte a purpose too limited for his ambition, and the dismemberment of the Empire itself at that moment both impossible and worthless, we must advert to other grounds of reasoning, if we would examine his irruption into Russia proper, by any received rules of intelligence, policy, or calculation.

The *beau ideal* of every Frenchman's mind has long been the empire of the world. Checked in his approaches to so beautiful a vision, Louis XIV. resigned the love of it only with his life. It was not relinquished, but suspended, by the indolence of his

* The fine expression of Marquess Wellesley, when alluding to the character of Buonaparte in his Speech on the Conduct of the War.—*March 12, 1813.*

successor. It was not abjured, but superseded, in the troubled reign of the late unhappy Monarch. It is not revived, but avowed, by this French Corsican, who wields against the liberties of other nations the same inhuman violence with which he subverted the laws and institutions of his own. The conquest of England herself is but a step towards the political paradise. French appetency and animosity, however, have indulged the belief, that our island presents the chief obstacle to an end so holy ; and that if she ceased to be an obstacle, she might be made the prime instrument of its execution. It is not, therefore, very rash to insist, that all the measures of Buonaparte's Government, which are connected with commerce or with foreign policy, have been designed and modelled with a view to the destruction of *this country*.

We are not called upon to demonstrate, nor can it be believed, that the Ruler of France is averse to a pacification with Great Britain. Peace and war, according to the Code Napoleon, are but separate paths to the same object. By a peace he would disarm us : by the terms of it he would dishonour us ; lowering the English people in their own esteem, and it that of other Nations ; relaxing the spirit which he cannot break ; undermining the strength which he dares not cope with ; working by laborious intrigue upon our lassitude and languor, to disinherit us of the fruits of a thousand victories, by withering in our bosoms the warlike mind. If peace on such terms, and fraught with such consequences, be desirable, I doubt not we may have it when we please ; *but, we shall obtain*

no other, until Buonaparte be humbled, intimidated, or worn out. The ruin of England, through the medium of war, is considered amongst French Statesmen as substantially practicable by two classes of measures;—by a direct invasion of her territory; and by a gradual waste of her resources. The first of these projects is most conformable to the character of Buonaparte—the second, to his means. Brute force is the natural weapon of a military despot, and is often the first to which he resorts: but the temporary annihilation of the French marine, at the renewal of hostilities in 1803, left Buonaparte no choice of aggressive measures against this country.* He knew,

* We had been used, since the first hour of the elevation of Buonaparte, to entertain the most profound sense of some overwhelming dangers with which the principles and duration of his Government threatened the independence of Europe.—Nor were the people of every country, where the expression of their natural sentiments was not regarded as a crime against the state, by any means slow to confer upon the Common Tyrant the epithets and honours due to his guilty enterprises. But indignation and invective were poured out upon each atrocity as it appeared, in its separate and peculiar attributes, without considering its place in the *System* of encroachment—or its real tendency to help forward the general result. So, the universal panic infused by the name, the genius, and unfathomed designs of Buonaparte, resembled the sort of sensation which overcomes us at sight of some unknown phenomena of nature, indicating, to our imagination, some new form of undefined and irresistible calamity—A profound and painful, but vague and bewildering terror—which leaves us at the mercy of every evil, by leaving us ignorant against what we have specifically to provide, or where we should direct our precautions. The variety of means employed by this Imperial Conspirator—the rapid succession of his attempts—after the multitude of his cotemporary undertakings—seemed to immerse his own schemes

indeed, that in the best days of France, it had been a question of frequent debate, whether the shaft should be directed against the extremities, or the vitals of England. The age of such discussions had apparently vanished. Ships, colonies, and commerce had sunk into mere declamatory phrases—hardly capable of warming the imagination, much less of exciting a serious hope. Distant enterprizes for Colonial objects, ended, where they began, with St. Domingo. America had not then proclaimed to the old world, of how fragile a texture was our boasted maritime reputation: the evil genius of Britain had not yet doomed to perish that sacred and majestic monument, veiled in her seamen's luxuriant laurels, and seated in their valiant blood. Napoleon himself quaked with superstitious reverence, and shrunk away in terror from the sanctuary, which meaner

in the confusion which he every where excited amongst the Nations against whom they were applied. While, therefore, this double blindness appeared to prevail—both as to the relation between his individual acts and his general object—and even as to the outline of that object itself—all hope, of a national and vigorous opposition to this terrible conqueror, intriguer, and impostor, must have been chimerical and absurd. It occurred to the Author, that an attempt (if successful, far from useless,) might be made, to trace the windings of Napoleon's policy, from the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, to the invasion of Russia. This has been the purpose of Letters 23 and 24; in which it was the intention of VETUS to shew, that different points of Europe have been seized by the French Government, as so many positions whence its forces might converge upon Great Britain—and that after the conquest of this Nation, the fires would diverge again from England as a common centre, and penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth.—Dec. 31, 1813.

hands have since been taught to pillage, pollute, and overturn.

Desperate of success upon the ocean, but terrible in his despair, he resolved to prosecute the invasion of England, in spite of her commanding navy. The camps and flotillas of Boulogne were far from despicable. Their uncounted numbers, with the short time and space through which they could be exposed to accident, filled the most reflecting minds with deep anxiety;—for though half the armament might have been sacrificed—half would have been sufficient to complete its courses; to cover this happy land with crimes and sufferings; and to lay our prosperity, if not our liberty, in ashes. The adventure from Boulogne was to be countenanced and protected by the only fleet which still remained to France. When this fleet was dispatched with ostentatious mystery, but with admirable judgment, on a feigned expedition to the westward, its design was penetrated by the * sagacity of Nelson—and dashed to pieces by his Herculean arm. That opportunity being lost, and events not ripe for another trial, the newly-formed alliances and general agitations of the Continent furnished Buonaparte with a plea—perhaps with a motive—for withdrawing his troops from the coast—and suspend-

* Lord St. Vincent is also said to have pronounced at once, that the cruise of Villeneuve was a mere feint—that his true destination was to return rapidly to Europe, take advantage of the absence of our pursuing squadron, and protect the armament from Boulogne. It was not many weeks until the *Moniteur* acknowledged, that the illustrious pair—the master and his pupil—were right. It is delightful to dwell upon facts like these.

ing the enterprize against England. But in the rage and heat of baffled animosity, he lighted on a fresh expedient for her ultimate ruin. When he saw her fleets and armies placed beyond his reach, he hastened to attack them in the elements of which they were compounded,—to institute an original act of denunciation against English opulence and resource,—to render this his “Continental System,” an eternal and impassable condition of whatever tolerance he might afford to other nations, in the enjoyment of the shadow of their liberties,—and to weave it into the frame of the political world, as the basis of all authority, and the price of all forbearance. Not aware of the subtile and elastic tendencies of commerce, he attributed to his new code of barbarous warfare against the progress of civilization, and the comforts of human life, a train of consequences more decisive, at least more immediate, than it was qualified by its nature to produce. It was to be a leading principle of his imperial condescensions to America—of the robberies which he practised upon his friends in Europe—of the mandates which he issued to his enemies. It constituted his sole pretext for the abominable seizure of Holland, the Hanse Towns, and Pomerania. It stood an essential and pervading stipulation, of the treaties out of which he frightened or defrauded the Negotiations of Tilsit and Vienna.

The confidence of Buonaparte in his recent invention, was speedily weakened—and never wholly revived. The resources of England evaded its touch,

or swelled under its pressure. Though it grew out of defeated enterprise and conscious necessity, he ceased to rely upon it as the single instrument of mortal mischief to this Empire; being tardy in the mode of its operation, and precarious in the event. Neither the fierceness, nor the obduracy, of his vengeance, therefore, would be satisfied without concurrent schemes, of a more brilliant and overpowering character. Of these—the *invasion of Spain* was one.

They are much deceived as to the grasp and complication of Buonaparte's policy, who consider the lawless attack upon Spain and Portugal, as an insulated aggression, likely to *finish* in mere conquest. To possess these countries would be nothing. To play them off as engines against other enemies, was the original plot of the usurper. We find accordingly, in one of his official papers, a distinct profession of his views. We see it there asserted, that the occupancy of the Peninsula was indispensable to his wars with more distant States; to escape the risk of being taken in reverse, by a Power on his southern frontier. We all know the bearing of this man's menaces,—that they who are not for him are against him,—and that neutrality is not within the pale of his endurance. To make each country a camp, and its people conscripts, is with him the end of public law. When he talks, therefore, of appropriating those inoffensive kingdoms on the ground of pure precaution,—when he reduces them to the condition of slaves, lest his own meditated provocations might hereafter raise

them into enemies,—the meaning, stripped of all artifice, is, that his schemes for the ruin of other nations, require aid from the materials of which Spain and Portugal are composed. As against the great body of the Continental Powers, it is difficult to imagine any weighty service to be derived by Buonaparte from the Peninsula. With reference, on the contrary, to his war with England, the subjugation of these monarchies is of the last importance. Years ago, in every discussion of this subject, the advantages which he would deduce from it were pointed out to the whole community: that it would enable him to prolong the basis of his *direct* operations against us,—to establish a naval arsenal, with an invading squadron, in harbours the best adapted of any in the world to the accommodation of armaments destined for the conquest of Ireland,—and thus to complete the southern investiture of the British dominions, by stretching his lines to that extremity of Europe.

The invasion of Spain and Portugal thence appears, to be an integral member of *the maritime war*.

Again and again we must recollect, that with regard to Great Britain Buonaparte has no choice of measures openly hostile. He cannot attempt her colonies. His impatient spirit will not watch the slow and doubtful evolution of his own anti-commercial system. He must therefore prepare himself to invade the heart of Britain;* or if more destructive to us,

* In the conversation between Buonaparte and Lord Whitworth, (1803,) reported by his Lordship to this Government, and inserted amongst the papers presented to Parliament—the First Consul makes

(and *not* otherwise,) he will offer our Government something in the garb of peace. On this ground it is that we ought sooner or later to reckon upon invasion as an event no less sure, than the existence of the rival Empires. Every thing in the colossal character of modern war, and in the fixed relations of France and England, goes to prove its necessity. To those who look below the surface of political combinations, every thing serves to indicate its predestined—though often interrupted, suspended, and perhaps irresolute—approach.

By the extinction of Great Britain as an independent State, no people in Europe could remain unmoved. The transfer of her genius, industry, opulence, and power, into the hands of that unrelenting despotism, against which, for the common safety of mankind, they have hitherto been, with more or less activity, exerted, would be a blow so fatal to human happiness, that all the spirit and foresight left amongst men, would be roused and arrayed by the prospect. The conquest of these islands could scarcely, therefore, be achieved by Buonaparte, except when surrounding nations lay prostrate and motionless at his feet. It is true, he has never seriously threatened an invasion of the British dominions, that other Sovereigns did not seize the opportunity to arm. On no occasion has he long employed a considerable force in any one quarter, that some attempt, however incomplete, injudicious, and disastrous, was not elsewhere made to shake off his yoke. The protracted

a distinct confession, that "He has no means of direct hostility
"against England, except invasion alone."—Dec. 31, 1813.

occupation of a French army in Spain has already excited two collateral wars in Europe. The movement of Austria in 1809, sprung confessedly from it. The present noble fight for the honour and existence of the Germans, *originates in that for the Peninsula*. Had the early subjugation of the Spanish people left the future course of Buonaparte undisturbed, the natural fruit would have followed in due season;—a portion of the victorious army, dispatched from one or more of the sea-ports so acquired, would ere now have executed, or resisted, the passage of the Shannon. It would in that case have been sufficient for Napoleon, to keep on foot armies of observation towards the North, whilst he pressed the assault of the British Islands, from Boulogne, the Scheldt, and the Peninsula. The delay, (would I might say failure) of the preliminary plot, has arrested the whole series of machinations linked with its accomplishment. It has sowed the sacred seeds of resistance amongst the Germans, and produced what we may term a change of front, throughout the vast alignment of hostilities. It has compelled the French Ruler to open a fresh artery, from which to pour out the life blood of the northern Continent,—that on her breathless body he may erect his engines for the conquest of the maritime world—and the irretrievable extinction of the British name.

To the close affinity between the earlier disappointments of Buonaparte beyond the Pyrennees, and the feelings which drove him into the war with Russia, I shall at my first leisure moment again bespeak your notice.

VETUS.

LETTER XXIV.

Policy of Buonaparte.—(Same Subject continued.)

SIR,

JUNE 4, 1813.

THE French account of the battles of Bautzen having this moment reached me, I must observe that these events, however memorable or decisive, yield in my judgment no temptation to break the series of preliminary discussions, upon which I entered in my former letter. The late engagements differ from that of Lutzen, inasmuch as the Allies kept the field in one instance, and lost it in the other. In circumstances of a far higher nature, they will be found precisely to agree; namely, in the splendid and consummate ability with which the Allies were conducted, and the admirable courage with which they fought. This is the soul of war. If the political nerve of the Allied Cabinets were equal to the gallantry of their troops, the freedom of the Continent would be unquestionable. Many suggestions offer themselves, which I need not now indulge, since they will necessarily fall within the scope of future enquiry. One assurance, however, you may convey to the most sanguine of your readers,—that at the actual crisis of public affairs, *neither armistic nor congress would lead us one step towards peace.*

If the present war in the North of Europe could be presumed to spring from temporary passions, or from a detached and incidental policy on the part of France, the most successful examination into its causes might serve rather to indulge a liberal curiosity, than to furnish us with an increase of useful knowledge, with lessons of conduct, or with means of safety.

But the discussion owes its value to others with which it is combined. I have already sketched some few of the arguments, which go to determine my own opinion, as to the unreal, or insufficient, motives, ascribed on that occasion to Buonaparte. My last letter was destined to enforce a belief, that, according to the calculations of this mortal dispenser of human wretchedness, the preservation of Turkey was needless and puerile,—the acquisition of Poland altogether inadequate,—and the dismemberment of Russia neither profitable nor attainable, when gravely viewed as practical incentives, to an immediate, extreme, and momentous war. So much for the negative of the question. But although the rejection of successive theories might ultimately guide us to the true one, we can arrive at inferences of the most weighty character, from positive and direct considerations.

I have said that the contest in the North of Europe may be traced to that for the Peninsula. It will be the business of the present paper to throw some new interest upon a truth so important, and so liable to be misunderstood.

The constitutional obstinacy of the Spanish people,

the impregnable nature of Portugal as a depot of defence, and the unrivalled skill with which these advantages were seized and improved by Lord Wellington, formed altogether a mass of obstruction, for which the French Ruler appears to have been wholly unprepared. But having undertaken the conquest of Spain, by way of an auxiliary to his maritime and commercial system,—the success of the project, so commenced, became of absolute necessity to his *political* system. Buonaparte would, by every law of his condition, feel the deepest solicitude for the event of the Spanish contest. If repulsed, it was not the loss of a commanding post, nor of a numerous army,—no—nor of military reputation, which he suffered. It was not a mere delay in the invasion of Ireland to which he must submit,—but it was a severe check to the march of despotism, in its encroachments on universal liberty;—it was the triumph of the first great nation, which he had ever encountered on its own soil in a struggle for objects, purely national,—the triumph of independent virtue over armed force. This, to Buonaparte, must be a tremendous evil. In his former attacks upon the Powers of the Continent, he had nothing to resist him, but the Court;—a Court, for the most part, rash, arrogant, superficial, cowardly, corruptible, and odious to those on whom alone it could rest for assistance in difficulty—for defence against danger—or for refuge under calamity however cruel. The subjects of such Monarchies made no exertion during war, nor performed any service, but that of hired

soldiers; and since the slightest manifestation of public opinion had been regularly discountenanced by the Genius of their Governments, the people looked on at the signature of each treaty which closed and commemorated a disastrous campaign, without aspiring, or rather condescending, to interpose between the Sovereign and his humiliations; or to remonstrate against the baseness by which their country was betrayed, and their allegiance transferred, like an article of ordinary merchandize

Buonaparte reasoned fairly from his experience of the Continent, and of the usual relations between despots and their slaves. He reasoned well from the premises with which he was familiar, that to snatch away the Crown of an absolute Monarch would guarantee the submission of an abject people. But he abused this just reasoning, by the levity and falsehood of its application, when he trusted to the seizure of the Royal Person, and to the *formal* dissolution of a substantial, though ceremonious Government, for ensuring his victory over the Spanish name. In all the multifarious action of arbitrary power, which Napoleon, beset with uneasiness, had exercised or witnessed, there was a perpetual collision between force and terror—an indefatigable straining of authority over its subjects, to the uttermost point of endurance. Such was the image that possessed him. He had no idea of Sovereignty in a posture of repose. It had escaped his reflection, that there might exist a superb and imperious principle of Government, mellowed down by conscious security, by the serenity of

years, and by the softening influence of usage, into a system not only tolerable, but grateful to the nation amongst whom it had been matured. Buonaparte was conversant with the letter alone; he misconceived the spirit of the Spanish Monarchy. The inhabitants of Spain (speaking broadly) bore the trappings of despotism, but felt not its yoke. The Court itself might be despised or hated; but if the person was obnoxious, the prerogative was sacred and undisturbed. Justice was impure—but her corruptions were immemorial, and not wholly unbalanced, evils; for they wrought as restraints upon the alacrity of litigation, and excited more of ridicule than disorder. If we describe the Inquisition as all-powerful, the mischiefs of such a tribunal must be essentially mitigated, when most Spaniards of rank were enrolled in its service; and where the Crown itself came to act against the subject, the tedious intricacy and inflexibility of office in that nation would operate like fetters on its violence.

But the pride of Spanish blood was from early youth nursed up in the bosom of the most unprovided peasant, whose occasional repinings at his own lot were feeble in comparison with the disdain he felt for that of other nations. In spite, therefore, of numberless vices and anomalies of their political system—although the remains of liberty, no longer secured by law, lived but through the indolent ascendancy of habit—although the remembrance of victory served but to aggravate the mortification of those who for centuries had ceased to conquer—al-

though departed opulence had left behind it passions, which indigence could not appease—the European subjects of the Spanish Crown were *practically* free, and substantially happy.

These premises might justify the conclusion, *d priori*, that a strong national character belonged to the Spaniards; and that when the Usurper, who, in distant regions, had met no resistance from patriotic or spontaneous courage, imagined that by carrying off the Regalia of the kingdom, he would stifle the means of opposition among its inhabitants, he proceeded on a fundamental and irretrievable error. In truth, by stripping that lofty-minded people of the Royal robes which concealed and kept down, but did not extinguish their native fire, he brought public sentiment, if I may so express myself, into contact with the air, and produced an explosion which has shaken, and which ought to have destroyed, the whole fabric of French ascendancy. Now mark the contrast between the Spanish and other wars. A defeat of one arbitrary Monarch by another is an event confined to Monarchs, and their immediate favourites or victims. It touches the royal, but not the human, sympathies,—it raises no question, except of naked controversy, on the sharpest and most efficient modes of dominion; and leads to few varieties, in the lot of vassals, whose hopeless condition no change of masters will relieve, and no caprice of power can exasperate. An unsuccessful campaign, therefore, made by Buonaparte, against the House of Austria, of Brandenburg, &c. might end in his

disgorging some portion of their accumulated spoils—in the detachment of some worthless and remote extremity, from his enormous usurpations; but it would still be a family quarrel amongst these Autocrats, and leave the influence and specific merits of despotism precisely on their ancient footing.

His contest with the unfettered nations of the Peninsula has opened a more interesting scene. It has committed the Invader, and he is conscious of it, against the natural feelings of mankind. Instead of remaining, as heretofore, cool or indignant spectators, the human race are now parties to the pending cause of freedom at large, against despotism personified in Buonaparte; and on the issue of the passing struggle hinges not the fate of the Portuguese or Spaniard, but of *those principles* to which the Tyrant has deliberately bound his own political existence.

First, then, the value of Spain with regard to the war against England;—secondly, the importance of the Spanish war, as generating a crisis in the fortunes of military despotism. Such are the considerations from which I long ago represented the feverish anxiety of Buonaparte, on the subject of the Peninsula, to be more intense than any rival appetite that disturbed him. We are not to be led away from this persuasion, by the fact of his employing a much larger force in Germany,—or of his increasing that force at the expense of his Spanish armies. The original design was to outstrip and anticipate the moral consequences of his attack upon the Spa-

niards, by making sure of their subjection, before other nations, harassed and exhausted by his cruelties, should awake to this new outrage upon their common rights. He therefore deluged the provinces beyond the Pyrennees with troops, that he might carry the Peninsula by storm. Nature, and the genius of Lord Wellington, repulsed him. From the flight of Massena we may date the rising murmurs, and threatening movements, of the North. Napoleon found that the assault had failed; but he hoped that a blockade might prosper. He therefore changed the elementary basis and intrinsic character of the Spanish war. Knowing that the Provisional Government could not prevent, and that the English Ministers would kindly assist the scheme, he resolved on converting *time* itself, from a deadly enemy, to an efficient ally. The delays he experienced had now produced the mischiefs he originally dreaded; the northern nations having been progressively and powerfully inflamed with a spirit of uncontrollable vengeance,—and French supremacy, from Dantzic to the Texel, being menaced with a decisive overthrow. He determined, therefore, by an irruption into the North of Europe, to dissipate the storm, since his most rapid and strenuous exertions in the South had proved insufficient to avert it.

This, then, is the stage to which we have brought our subject—The attempt at a *coup-de-main* on the Peninsula having utterly failed, an invasion of the British Islands from that point was no longer within the reach of Buonaparte. But if there be no limits

to the price at which he would have rated his success against the Spaniards,—first, as the proper instruments of ruin to England—and next, as the representatives of public liberty; in the same proportion did he feel the anguish of disappointment,—the necessity for indemnification,—and the appetite for revenge. Could he then make peace? No. The very contest for the Spanish Crown had armed both parties with pretensions from which neither could recede,—rendering peace, so far as Spain was the subject,—and invasion, so far as she could be the source of it, alike unattainable. To attempt England in her colonies was still too wild an enterprise; and to restrict the war to her finances, too slow a process. Nothing, (reluctant and incredulous as we are!) nothing again remained to him, but invasion,—invasion, proceeding from a different quarter,—fabricated with fresh materials,—and describing an opposite course.

The capabilities of the Western Coast of Europe, considered in relation to a direct investiture of these Islands, present a fruitful and magnificent field of speculation, to the eye of military genius. The prospect of an army of various nations, amounting to four or five hundred thousand men,—folded into many tremendous masses,—with all their naval means of transport, subsistence, and protection, issuing from the several mouths of a maritime frontier, that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Baltic Sea,—and urged by one simultaneous impulse, to one undivided end:—this is a spectacle which, even

to an Englishman of bold and capacious mind, has something in it so splendid, vast, and inspiring, as, I confess, would make me freely forgive the enthusiasm, to which it exalts the passions of a French soldier. On the faculty of confounding that prodigious movement,—a task of more sacred duty, of brighter glory, and of genius far more elevated,—it may hereafter become our province to dwell. The present theme is danger—not security.

The Scheldt and Boulogne seem qualified to form the centre of every consistent plan for the forcible subjugation of Great Britain. Unprotected, however, by secondary expeditions, it is weak to presume that an attack, from these points only, would be attended with a prospect of success. The coast, therefore, from the Harbour of Brest, to that of Cadiz, was destined, on the wide scale of Buonaparte's tactics, for the prolongation and position of his left wing. The effort failed. The post could not be carried. He found that unless he deferred indefinitely the day of battle, he must support the centre, not with his left, but *with his right*. This is a circumstance of inestimable moment, towards the explanation of all that followed. Holland, undoubtedly, was in his hands; but would Holland answer the purpose of a detached position? No. The Texel itself, the Northern extremity of the Dutch maritime frontier, was seated too near the armaments of the Scheldt; and would constitute rather a part of, than a protection to, his main undertaking. It became necessary to establish a line still farther north-

ward. The Elbe and the Weser were liable to some local objections, added to that of contiguity, which applied to Holland; and Europe was destitute of any station on the outside of the Sound, which would answer, to their full extent, the various exigencies of that period in the life of Buonaparte. It then became his urgent policy—to achieve the *dominion of the Baltic*.

Denmark, and the northern coast of Germany, operate, with reference to the British Empire, not only as channels through which it may be enriched, but as points from which it may be attacked or defended. The value annexed to them by French Statesmen, is, in a ratio, compounded of these manifold capacities. The fatal use to which the resources of Denmark would be convertible in the hands of France, may be inferred from the purposes to which they were actually destined, by certain articles of the Treaty of Tilsit;—and the powerful influence naturally assigned to the possession of the southern shores of the Baltic, appears from the liberality with which French garrisons were distributed among the several fortresses on that line of coast—or among those of the interior by which it was effectually commanded. Colberg, in Prussian Pomerania, and Stralsund, in the Swedish, were, I believe, the only exceptions. But an attempt was made on Colberg, in 1811; and Stralsund was seized in the following year, when the suspicions of Buonaparte were fully roused to the wavering allegiance of his pupil. The measures of the Confederacy,

formed at Tilsit, were broken by the capture of the Danish Fleet. The loose operation and precarious issue of the Continental System, undermined as it was by the ingenuity of every counting-house in Europe, confirmed the effects of our expedition against the Danes,—that single phænomenon of Ministerial vigour,—and drove Buonaparte to an assault upon the Pyrennees. By the tardy and ambiguous progress of his arms in Spain, he was compelled once more to re-establish his Northern Combinations; or forsake the war with England as a hopeless cause. More rapid in the transition than a famished eagle, he flew across the Continent,—exhibiting a simple uniformity in his object, with a grandeur, variety, and alternation in his means, to which some of his living enemies afford a disgraceful contrast,—but to which there is no parallel in former ages.

Thus resolved by temper, and thus ruled by necessity, what obstacle interrupted the instantaneous execution of his plans?—Why was not Zealand occupied at once?—Why not a chain of arsenals provided?—men-of-war built, as at Antwerp, and in Holland?—armaments equipped?—and troops in readiness for transportation?—Plainly, because such steps could be taken only where the people of the country were submissive, and his authority inaccessible and secure. But the German nations were ripe for revolt;—all his preparations, therefore, might have fallen into the hands of the insurgents, and gone to the subversion of his own power, unless

Germany were *first reconquered*. Two great features of Napoleon's genius were now displayed under the most striking form:—His audacity in the conception of this terrible enterprise—his subtlety in the instruments that he employed. Had he left the agitations of the German character to swell and quicken without guidance or control, they might have burst in ruin around him. The Kings of his creation, the tributaries of the Rhine, would have fled before the slaves of their own delegated prerogative,—and the whole exterior mechanism of the Revolution must have been constructed anew. He did not sleep at the approach of danger. He summoned his vassals to the French banners—to a field of his own choice: with the confidence of one long versed in the art of wielding an assemblage of untamed spirits,—and under pretences allied to the dispositions with which they met. He was at little loss for an expedient to direct the passions which he had pre-occupied; or to waste the strength which he had thus united. To the angry Germans he proclaimed a crusade for restoring freedom to the discontented Poles; but aware, that while the native power of Russia remained unbroken, all the sufferings of the Continent would look to her for relief; and that her policy would supply them with perpetual encouragement to insurrection, he combined with the project of wresting Poland from her sway, that of *overwhelming and destroying her entire army*, in the conflict. Poland, as a dependency of France, would be much more formidable to Austria, whom, in mili-

tary phrase, *she turned*, than to Russia, by whom she herself was flanked. So far as regarded the movements of the Austrian Cabinet, Buonaparte might have safely terminated the last campaign, by fixing a Polish Kingdom on the back of Hungary. Not so with his Muscovite opponent. The retreat of the Russian army was the ruin of more than half his scheme. Had he retraced his footsteps from the frontier, after merely organizing the new provinces which he had acquired, I do not say it would have been ultimately an erroneous system; but it would have clouded all his immediate views, which centered in the maritime war. The army of Alexander would have threatened him like a crouching lion. The Saxon, Prussian, and Hanoverian auxiliaries, were of doubtful character, and of tremendous force. Here was a key to the mystery of that fatal expedition to Moscow. Here was a boldness, wickedness, and depth of conspiracy, alike difficult to unravel and to resist. The invasion of England was fruitless, while Germany was on the verge of revolution. It was necessary, therefore, to divert the German youth from accomplishing the freedom of their native country. It might be prudent to break down the strength of their neighbour and protector: but it was an original and comprehensive beauty in the drama, to make each the instrument of the other's fate. This it is that speaks the master-workman. Two hundred thousand German youths butchered or frozen*

* There is reason to apprehend, that the number of foreigners in the French service on that cruel and desperate enterprize of

amidst the wilds of Tartary, were just so much patriotic spirit withdrawn from the protection of its native land. Two hundred thousand Russians reciprocally butchered, were so many natural allies of their murderers—so many brave obstacles to the ruin of Germany, thrown aside from the path of the common tyrant. Thus would he sacrifice on the same altar, the friends and children of the German blood. Thus would he bury in the same grave, the liberties of this nation, with those of her ancient kindred. Thus would he atone to France herself for the evils and afflictions with which she has reproached him; since he lives but to provide her with associates in misfortune, and to level her pre-eminence of disgrace.

VETUS.

Buonaparte has been rather underrated than exaggerated by Vetus. The distinct and separate corps of auxiliaries mustered about one third of the entire host; but the ranks of those which were nominally French regiments contained, in many instances, a large proportion of Dutch, German, and other foreign soldiers.

LETTER XXV.

Prospects of England—Lord Castlereagh—Policy of Marquis Wellesley adopted and vindicated by Ministers.

SIR,

JULY 13, 1813.

THE extent and rapidity of the Northern Campaign,—its proximity to England, and to the interests of England,—wrought upon our feelings with too much violence, to admit of its being examined by the people of this country with temper, precision, or success. Like a volcanic fire, it threatened those who watched its devastations. Whatever portion of good or evil, therefore, may be entailed by *the Armistice* on our enemies or Allies, one benefit must result from this transient pause amidst the roar of battle. It gives to those, who from the station of actors, have sunk into the obscurity, without enjoying the tranquillity, of spectators*,—to Englishmen, of all classes, it gives a leisure moment to deliberate—one brief moment, in which they may recollect calmly, what they have seen hastily; learning to appreciate, while undisturbed by accident or tumult,

* This must be understood with reference to Germany, where, in truth, we are worse than spectators;—spectators in what we do,—and parties in what we suffer.

the changes which their condition has already undergone; and to define the prospects which await them.

That the Spanish war was to be a step towards the invasion of Ireland,—that the war with Russia was to be preliminary to the invasion of England,—are truths which my Letters 23 and 24 were destined to elucidate and enforce. Are the people of England ready to follow up this subject? Are Ministers as well prepared to digest the consequences, as some of their official friends have shewn themselves to receive the fact? I trust that no left-handed ingenuity has been employed to misinterpret the drift of my former observations. If a strict investigation into the course of Napoleon's enterprizes led me to pronounce that scourge of human liberty a tyrant no less terrible in wickedness than in power, let it not be charged as an effusion of low revenge, but as a fair and involuntary argumentative deduction. To those, who are incapable of better warfare, may be resigned the task of railing their fierce antagonist into justice, impotence, or peace. My reference to his character was interwoven with the description of his policy; and was pushed no farther than seemed necessary to ascertain its connexion with the source of all our dangers. It constituted a grand ingredient in the proof, that England is now *a principal* in two, co-existing, wars*;

* This indeed was a material object with the author in his development of the tendencies of Buonaparte's foreign policy—to bring it home to the feelings of every man amongst us, that England herself was the grand victim against whom his measures were mainly directed—and to appeal to every spark of wisdom and o

—a principal in the same degree, and in the same fulness of construction, as if the armies by which Spain and Russia have been invaded were encamped within sight of Dublin and of Edinburgh;—a principal in that eternal stake which hangs on the issue of either conflict;—a principal in the establishment of fame and freedom—or in the base fellowship of deserted duties, of tarnished honour, and of ruined hopes.

But if these dreadful agitations of the Continent promised to be only forerunners of a more fatal concussion here;—if the flux and reflux of this tide of blood throughout Europe, were but the harbingers of a purple deluge upon our own shores;—if, in fine, the works begun upon the Ebro and the Vistula were

patriotism in the nation, on behalf of those sacred principles of public duty, which call upon us to aid our allies on the Northern Continent, with the same energy as had animated our best efforts in Spain—and with as keen perseverance as if the contest lay within the bosom of this country. Government have strong and real claims to our support in this illustrious struggle—what they have done, for the grand alliance, they have (I speak of late periods) done well—what they have intended, they have intended with generosity and honour. The most dubious branch of their conduct is that in relation to subsidies—but even there, we must fairly state, that if they have erred, it is an error for which the crisis pleaded loudly—and the censure of which must be guarded by many qualifications.—Suppose an alienation should soon take place between us and one or more of our subsidized friends—it is plain that we furnish means against our own interests. On the other hand, if our subsidies be first employed by our allies in a sensible reduction of the power of France, it is in comparison a secondary matter, how they afterwards behave to England.

actually the piles and buttresses of invasion—the substantial members of a direct attack upon the British Islands—it is quite obvious that the duties of the English Government ought to be measured by the interests for which they fought: and the prime question which offers itself to our examination is—How they have discharged those duties?

It animates and cheers me to re-enter upon this theme, when a ray of sunshine bids fair to illuminate the darkness which has hitherto oppressed it. The most delightful harvest is that of hope, from a field which was but lately overrun with apprehension: and to a generous mind there is no prerogative so grateful, as that of bestowing some confidence on those, who had once filled us with suspicion, disappointment, or despair.

Ministers have within these few weeks stood on ground, which, if they had occupied it at an earlier season, would have enabled them to repel in a variety of directions the force of public censure. The servants of the Crown are national property. The acquisition of character to a Statesman, is strength to the State. At the commencement of the present Session, few men in office appeared before the country with names more ambiguous or less allied to popularity than Lord Castlereagh. The love of power, without the care of reputation, was ascribed to him by those who were not his enemies. The love of place without power, the genuine ambition of a slave, was affixed to him by those who were not his friends. Vetus, though never his foe, was little prepared to

applaud him—nor can his respect and admiration for some parts of the Noble Viscount's conduct be deemed less honourable to his Lordship, because they have been hardly won. It is the privilege of an anonymous writer to use no reserve in his expressions. In a matter of the highest delicacy, Lord Castlereagh is said to have behaved with transcendent spirit. His Lordship may often convict himself of being a mistaken politician; but in perceiving the essential difference between guilt and rectitude, I cannot find, that on the occasion alluded to, his head or heart was wrong. When a criminal enquiry of the most solemn nature began to overleap the first principles of English Law, and to approach the confines of persecution, it ought to be acknowledged by us, and impressed upon our children, that a Cabinet Minister tendered the resignation of his seals, rather than be supposed to countenance proceedings which he deliberately condemned—rather than sacrifice to the frowns or blandishments of power the purest dignity within his reach—the protection of the weak or innocent. Lord Castlereagh may be assured that no particle of his merits is lost upon those who have naarrwly observed him. On the Catholic question he had, through a concurrence of untoward circumstances, excited some doubts of his own integrity. His recent conduct has wholly removed them. By the consistent, manly, and *intrepid* support which he gave to the Bill for enfranchising his fellow subjects, he proved himself as much the friend of equal liberty, as by his interposition in the former instance, he

shewed himself the advocate of equal justice. But it was not towards the Catholics alone, that the Noble Viscount displayed the true colouring of his character. The great patrons and managers of the measure in the House of Commons were, Henry Grattan—and the Right Honourable Mr. Canning. Delicacy forbids me to do more than hint at transactions, notorious indeed to all the world, but extinct, I willingly hope and believe, in the recollection of the parties themselves. The relation long subsisting between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Grattan in the Irish Parliament—the occurrences between Mr. Canning and his Lordship here—both combined with his demeanour on the Catholic Question—must be, however, slightly resorted to, before we can describe, or estimate, the qualities which belong to him. To yield to others, and these his ancient rivals, the precedence to which he might have fairly, though perhaps not successfully, aspired, because it would conciliate the Catholic—to act under these his rivals, as his leaders, and to take upon himself the introduction of what was most obnoxious to the Catholic, because it would conciliate the Protestant—cordially to facilitate, and vigorously to enforce, the progress of a measure, destined to immortalize his political adversaries—and to obscure his name by the effulgence which it shed round theirs—such were not symptoms of an ordinary nature—they could result from none but an elevated and accomplished mind. These are my views of Lord Castlereagh's course from the latter end of February to the rejection of the Catholic Bill.

They have destroyed whatever disposition may once have possessed me, to arraign the measures of his peculiar department. Would to God he had relieved us from the necessity of arraigning them! Why has he not selected a different office? or by different proceedings towards foreign nations, approved the wisdom of his choice? It is, I suppose, an unwholesome indulgence, to feast thus keenly on his Lordship's principles, since by way of remedy we are to be drenched without remorse, in deep and unpalatable errors. To trace the springs of even partial failure in our policy, is at best an unwelcome employment—but should the task devolve on Vetus, it will be henceforth executed with unspeakable regret.

If we turn from the Ministerial Leader in the House of Commons to the acts of the Cabinet at large, this, it will be confessed, is precisely the moment at which the blindest partisan of the Regent's Ministers would call for an investigation of their merits. Were any man cold enough to remain unmoved by the glorious tidings from the Peninsula—it is an indifference which none would be weak enough to avow. The triumph achieved is equal to that of Blenheim—not inferior in any of its aspects—superior in some. There is no record of a veteran army, struck with a paralysis so destructive of its military powers, by the mere force of that Genius which assaulted and confounded them. There is no recorded instance of a body of 70,000 veterans, so reduced in one short hour, from the condition of a

gallant army to that of a defenceless multitude. Had Joseph and his troops been contending within the frontier of France—and in the close vicinity of abundant magazines, their stores and equipments might be regarded but as secondary objects, and not worth risking the fate of the army for their preservation. In that case the whole would have been at once refurnished—the cause would have survived with the soldiers. Here, every thing is reversed. In an enemy's country, exhausted and inveterate, an army stripped of stores, ammunition, and subsistence, can be an army no longer. I consider the French force engaged at Vittoria as at present *ipso facto* annihilated—the Gallic eagle torn piecemeal—and his plumage scattered to the winds.

It would be presumptuous to soil by one breath of panegyric the brightness of our General's glory. He who has never lost a battle, can become greater only from misfortune—for except the majesty of *suffering* virtue, he has worn out every topic of applause.

Nor would it be more indicative of bad taste to expatiate in superfluous praises of the British Chief, than uncandid and illiberal to refrain from due acknowledgments to those by whom at length he is supported. Ministers, so far as we yet can judge, appear, in this campaign, to have performed their duty to the Peninsula. I never was insensible to the difficulties attendant on a vigorous prosecution of the Spanish war. But if it were a difficult, it was a necessary labour—one whose pains bore little com-

parison to its importance. However invidious, therefore, it now may seem, it must be highly salutary at least, to bring forward some concise reflections upon a subject, *still* of the most pressing and precarious class.

Were I to re-open in its full extent the great discussion on the conduct of the war, I would take for the bases of all my reasonings, two amongst the finest compositions of modern times—the speeches made by Marquis Wellesley, at the commencement of the Session, and on the 12th of March—compositions which rose majestic and beautiful, from the shapeless rubbish that surrounded them. In the first of these solemn and memorable addresses to Statesmen of every future age, the general propositions asserted were, that the efforts of England had not been commensurate with the resources which she possessed, or with the interests for which she struggled—and that an extraordinary crisis then stared us in the face, which justified and enjoined *extraordinary* exertions. The Earl of Liverpool, admitting the magnitude of the cause at issue, denied the predicated amplitude of our means—and confessing that the actual state of the French armies and of Europe constituted a crisis which never might recur, he gravely deprecated the recommendation of a temporary “flourish,” which must, indeed, prove decisive of the war, but would leave the country exanimate from her victory, and incapable of continuing the contest, *so decided!* That is to say, he agreed that the occasion was momentary—and *argued* as if it were to be

eternal! This was not all. The Treasury papers rung the changes for weeks together on the arrogant and silly cry, that the Noble Marquis was strong only in general charges—in loose statements of a force which had no existence—in importunate demands for money which could nowhere be found—in vague and shallow hints at measures of hostility which he had never while in office digested or matured—and could never distinctly designate. It is far from my wish that this recapitulatory notice should be supposed to spring from a wanton spirit of controversy,—or that it should be turned to the revival of mischievous enmities, between men who have each been employed for the public service. Recorded facts are useful land-marks, by which Ministers, especially, may direct their future course.

The Statesman, to whose views, and principles, and actions, I have, in the progress of these Letters, so frequently adverted, appears to have been provoked by the rash defiance of the Ministerial advocates, into a more minute investigation of their errors,—and a more demonstrative evidence of the solid ground on which his own opinions were formed. The Motion which he made on the 12th of March, for a “Committee to enquire into the conduct of the “war,” was preceded by a speech of nearly four hours,—to which I shall not refer you as a model of commanding eloquence,—for that is a quality common to the orations of Lord Wellesley: but I would earnestly impress it on the remembrance of your readers, as a document standing absolutely alone,

for characteristics more intelligible to the mass of mankind,—and more inseparable from the *business* of nations. For assiduous research,—indefatigable industry,—extensive and various knowledge,—soundness of principle,—and exactness of detail,—it has never fallen to my lot to examine a production so comprehensive,—so precise,—so utterly unanswerable in every fact,—so fraught with *proof* in all its reasonings.

Having been taunted by Ministers with looseness of calculation, as to the amount of the reinforcements which he had required,—

He stated, 1st, that 15,000 men, joining Lord Wellington *at the proper moment*, would have driven the French beyond the Pyrennees.

2d. He brought it as a fact from the official papers, that something short of 10,000 men had actually reached Lord Wellington during the campaign,—but at a season of the year, and under circumstances of operation, which rendered the junction *useless*. The question of reinforcement, therefore, was reduced to a difference of little more than 5000 men;—and from the same official paper it was positively shewn, that 53,000 infantry and cavalry of the line were at the very hour enjoying pay and idleness in England.

3d. On the question of money, the friends of Government were equally unsuccessful. It was a gross mistake, or something worse, to represent the demand for more liberal supplies to Lord Wellington, as entailing a necessity for additional burthens upon England. Had the fact been so, the crisis would

have excused it,—but the reverse was truth. The requisition for the Peninsula, on the scale of action recommended by Lord Wellesley, fell considerably short of a million sterling. Here also, in money, as in men, a mere trifle would have turned the beam of human fortune. The question was not whether more taxes should be raised,—or heavier loans required,—or a Sinking Fund fatally anticipated:—these measures have indeed been resorted to—but not by the Noble Marquis. His demand was for less than one million sterling,—with which sum, applied to set in motion the corresponding reinforcement of troops, he pledged himself for the final deliverance of the Spaniards;—but the money was already raised,—it was only abused and perverted to purposes, frivolous, yet lavish—needless, as unprofitable. From the estimates and documents on the table, it was made clear, that for barracks and breakwaters, *mints* and martello-towers, with a few similar items of overwhelming and stupendous urgency—a sum was actually consumed *in England*, more than sufficient to terminate the war in Spain.

4th. Again: the mismanagement of the money-market, so far as regarded the supply of specie, was another subject of reasonable blame to Ministers. What, then, came out upon an accurate inspection of this charge? Why, it appeared, that England, pronounced by some persons to be wholly destitute of the precious metals, had been the depository of immense treasures, and the channel through which im-

mense treasures had flowed into neighbouring countries. It appeared, that by the license-system, that specie which was inaccessible to the hands of our Government, found its way, in payment for French luxuries, into the pockets of Buonaparte himself,—and, to use the emphatic words of the Noble Marquis—that whilst the armies of Great Britain were almost pennyless, “*the French army was paid with English Gold.*” It was moreover proved, that the system of pecuniary negotiation, adopted by Ministers in Spain and elsewhere, tended mainly to aggravate the difficulties of procuring it, and to enhance the price of it when procured ;—that we had refused, on some occasions, the moderate terms of the market,—and offered, on other occasions, terms, immoderately exceeding those of the market ;—to crown all, that we had established a competition—not by rendering the merchants competitors for the custom of the British Government—but by rendering the agents of that Government competitors *against each other*, for the gold and silver of the merchant ; and thus, by the complications of a pernicious system, bidding against ourselves for the remainder of that commodity, the marketable amount of which our licenses had sensibly diminished.

These were statements, and proofs, and illustrations, for which those whom they affected were lamentably unprepared. The present Lords and Rulers of the Treasury have ever been, *par excellence*, masters of the lower elements of computation ;—but in

this instance the Sons of Reduction stood motionless and astonished,—figures of arithmetic, since the days of Mr. Pitt, had been discarded, as bad company, by the figures of rhetoric,—now vulgar fractions emerged from misery,—the listening snakes of Downing-street forgot to hiss,—a second Orpheus descended to charm their black abodes,—and eloquence and genius spread light and harmony through the dismal regions of Cocker.

It is not to the present Lord Liverpool I address myself,—to him who has ably seconded the energies of Lord Wellington, and fed the stream of battle at Vittoria;—it is to the Lord Liverpool of 1812, who withheld the means, and abjured the possibility of conquest;—to him who reversed the maxim of Cæsar; and where that hero would have felt that nothing was done—assured us that naught had been omitted. When I stated the fact last year, that Tarragona was the point assigned by Lord Wellington, for the debarkation of the Sicilian army—and that the British General was grievously maimed in his operations, by the flight of that force to Alicant—the statement was answered not by a contradiction, but by something which bordered on evasion—to wit, that Lord Wellington was apprised (and who was not?) of Maitland's departure to the South! Now, that Lord Wellington is left his own master—what follows? He orders the Sicilian force *back*, to its original destination—and we hear of its landing at Tarragona.

We were told by the Noble Earl no longer ago

than last December, that any such effort of finance—or any such increase of force, as would enable Lord Wellington to do more than he had already done—that is, to contend with the army from which he retired—would have been an idle and a fatal “flourish,”—from the effects of which this country could not recover. This flourish, be it remembered, would have cost (as above mentioned) 5000 men—and 800,000*l.* in money: in return, it would have finished the war in Spain, and left our whole force *disposable for Germany*. Now what is the fact? There is nothing like a consistent politician. Within a few months of this famous declaration—previous to the campaign of 1813—Lord Wellington *is* provided with those very means which were before scouted as visionary and impracticable:—he *has* been enabled to overcome that army, which we were so lately informed it was useless to resist. The fatal “flourish,” therefore, has been cut—it has been cut upon a scale of gigantic magnitude, compared with the modest emergency of last summer—for 50,000,000*l.* have been raised, instead of one, and the reinforcements more than doubled! What, then, are we to conclude from this? I remember once an Irish Bishop*, struck by the discordance between the several branches of an Act of Parliament, described the preamble as “a starting-post for the Act to run away from.” The principles

* The late Dr. Law, Bishop of Elphin, brother to Lord Ellenborough,—a prelate of powerful ability—of cheerful and instructive conversation—of various learning—and of exemplary life.

of Ministers, I am much afraid, are sometimes also preambles to their acts—"starting-posts for their Lordships to run away from!" How else shall we reconcile the policy of 1812, with that of the present year? Both, surely, cannot be defensible;—for on the plain maxims announced by Ministers, even in the *yet unfinished Session*, the effort that England has recently made is one by which she must necessarily be ruined.

Once more, let me disclaim all spirit of hostility to Administration. If one sentiment have, while I address you, any predominating influence in my breast,—it is gratitude for the service which they have just rendered to this country. To reprove their past delinquencies towards Spain, is to praise the energy which they are now evincing;—and when we reprehend their former languor, we are bound to acknowledge that it is more than redeemed.

On the other hand, it is but justice to remind you, that on no occasion have I ever demanded an enlargement of the burthens already borne by this Empire. We are taxed enough. Our loans are of sufficient magnitude. Our sinking fund is sufficiently disturbed.—All these are irresistible arguments—for what? For the efficacious and direct employment of the weapons afforded to us by such prodigious contributions—seeing that the system *cannot last*. In upholding energy and rapidity, therefore, we plead for true economy;—we do not assert the want of means,—but we deprecate the evaporation of mighty means, in

wavering and feeble measures. It is not against Ministers—it is for their benefit, and for that of the nation, we ought to discuss the problem, “what might have been the effect of Lord Wellington’s successes, had they been achieved in time to admit of his co-operation in the North?” On this point I propose very shortly to address you.

VETUS.

LETTER XXVI.

Tarragona—Doubts on the Probability of Lord Wellington invading France.

SIR,

JULY 20, 1813.

THE point being in my judgment long since decided, how far it would have been practicable to realize in the last campaign, successes equally brilliant with those which have justly constituted the pride of Ministers, and the glory of Lord Wellington, in the present,—the comparative value of such services must, nevertheless, be governed by the periods which have produced them,—and as it forms a question of fair and interesting discussion, I am by no means anxious that it should terminate in crimination or reproach.

The flight of Sir J. Murray arrests our notice at the outset, and is, to be sure, an unlucky excrescence on the beautiful figure of Vittoria. It is, indeed, a *primâ facie* failure of an expedition, most important to the objects for which that great battle was fought—most critically important from the time at which it was undertaken—from the scene to which it was directed—and from the enemy (Marshal Suchet) for whose individual destruction it was employed. It is, moreover, an event doubly offensive and repugnant to our national feelings here, from the unsullied splendour of those deeds, with which it has unavoida-

bly been contrasted. French accounts, we must observe, are perilous guides to truth—and for the details of this misfortune we were until within these few days destitute of all other intelligence. From the statements of Suchet, however, now fully borne out by those of the British Commander, I am apprehensive that we may collect two facts of considerable moment :

1st. That the fort of Balaguer was abandoned and destroyed by the British army, though it actually afforded them a key to the French communications, and cut off the enemy from the great coast road which connects Tarragona with Tortosa. This is undoubtedly a just subject of enquiry—and the guilt or innocence of Sir John Murray will turn on the question, “ whether Balaguer was or was not tenable against all chances, by a British garrison ? ”

2. It does appear, both from our own dispatches, and from those of Marshal Suchet, that a British force of at least 15,000 men, provided with a formidable train of artillery, was detained before the town of Tarragona, from the 3d to the 14th day of June ; and then precipitately raised the siege, with the loss of its guns and ammunition. To this alarming information it may be added, that the defences of Tarragona had been so destroyed by the enemy, as not to leave even a ditch remaining ; and that the garrison, which, while Tarragona was a Spanish fortress, had consisted of more than 5,000 men, was reduced by the French to 6 or 800—in itself a sufficient proof that the bulk of the fortifications *had* been dismantled—and a

ground at least of reasonable fear, that the measures taken by the English General were eminently devoid of skill and vigour.

3. We may at the same time understand from the reports of Suchet, that a hostile force of serious amount had advanced on *both flanks* of Sir John Murray. Now supposing that officer to make (what I confess seems to me to be impossible) a good defence against the charge of inefficiency and languor in the siege of Tarragona itself, there is nothing in the fact of his relinquishing that operation which may not be explained on obvious principles, without resorting to the extremity of a public trial. The circumstances and mode of his retreat, however, still become subjects of examination. I do not advert to his betaking himself on board ship, rather than attempting to open a communication with Lord Wellington; for if too weak to stand a conflict with the double force advancing from Valencia and Barcelona, it is plain enough, by an inspection of the map, that he ought not to have risked a movement upon the interior, which would expose him to the certainty of being intercepted and overwhelmed by the three co-operating corps of Matthieu, Suchet, and (in that case also of) Clausel.

The mischief lies in a different part of the narrative. Sir John Murray seems to have made a retreat, which, even if necessary, was not a little disgraceful. To be surprised by an enemy is indelible disgrace. The surprise of this officer is clear from his precipitation; and that his return on board ship

was not so much a retreat, as a flight attended with the worst confusion and precipitancy, is evident from the sacrifice of a noble train of artillery, with their equipage, ammunition, and implements of siege. If we do not, therefore, concur with M. Suchet in the shameful motive which he has ascribed to the English General—and at once acknowledge that he was in a confounded fright—we must unquestionably admit the more delicate assertion, that he ran away *for fear of being frightened*.

The outcry raised against Ministers, on this occasion, is wholly unjustifiable, or, to say the least of it, premature. I am willing enough to take it for granted, that the brother of Sir James *Ferrol* is not of a very promising breed—and that in writing, as in fighting, there have appeared strong symptoms of affinity. These, it should nevertheless be added, have come out since the appointment. But Sir John Murray, we are told, is connected with the borough of Weymouth by influence, and with Lord Mulgrave by marriage; and we are to infer that his promotion has arisen specifically from these inauspicious causes. Far be from me the Herculean task of crushing the Hydra-headed accusations against an “illustrious” personage, whose absence even his enemies are disposed to consider as no slight reimbursement for his deeds. It is a maxim as yet unknown to the Constitution, that political influence or personal connexion should *debar* an individual from office or command. Without reverting to ages past, such a principle would have excluded Lord William Bentinck from a post, in which he has,

by the manifestation of invincible fortitude and spirit, saved the interests of this Empire throughout the Mediterranean seas;—such a sordid and shallow principle would have stopped the career of Lord Wellington in early youth, and left to France the boast of which his triumphs have despoiled her—that she possessed the ablest soldiers of Europe, and of this century. There is something remedial of its own poison in the excitement of unfounded clamour, since it yields the opportunity of establishing wholesome truths. *De paribus amicissimum*, is not only a fair indulgence to Ministers in the choice of their agents, but it is a wise and valuable rule of selection. It superadds private solicitude to public zeal. The Minister who appoints his bosom-friend to a high and responsible military station, will be actuated by a powerful class of feelings to furnish the object of his personal affection with abundant means of victory. The officer chosen by a Minister whom he regards not only as an authorised superior to whom he owes obedience, but as the protector of his private fortunes, will, apart, it is to be presumed, from more abstract motives, devote his best ability to the success of an enterprize, calculated by its issue to curtail or to perpetuate the existence of his patron's power. Confidence between the employer and his instrument is of high utility, and at some periods of our history has been of rare occurrence. For my part, therefore, were the contest to lie between the nephew of Lord Mulgrave and an inferior person, I would, *cæteris*

paribus, prefer the relative of the Noble Lord, as being, on that ground merely, the best public officer*. The case assumes a different aspect, when the officer so selected shall have proved himself unworthy of the choice. It is one thing to promote a man whose reputation has been hitherto (officially) uncensured; but quite another thing to support him, unpunished, through cowardice, criminality, and dishonour. It would be presumptuous and oppressive to insist on facts, not in evidence—or to assert what I collect from rumour only—that Sir J. Murray's character was *not unknown*. Allowing him to be a man (as we are bound to suppose him) unblemished, though notoriously far from distinguished, it is candid to infer that he was not originally destined to be Commander-in-chief of the Sicilian expedition. He was, I believe, no otherwise than *ad interim*, until Lord Wm. Bentinck should arrive. Events unforeseen, and absolutely unavoidable, detained his Lordship at Palermo; and as his arrival on the Spanish coast, although uncertain, might be immediate likewise, it became doubtful whether the exigency of the public service would not be more aptly consulted by leaving

* What I have said in the text is in defence of the general principle, that high connexion, instead of an obstacle, may sometimes be fairly a recommendation to command. But every case must stand upon its own merits. The brave Lord Wellington is said to *know* this person. Had the great Field Marshal been consulted, long odds would have been offered in the sporting world as to the future destination of Sir John Murray.

matters as they were, subject to the hope of Lord W. Bentinck's speedy presence, than by disarranging and overturning the Sicilian Staff, and incurring the delay which must necessarily proceed out of a new nomination from England. If not blameable, therefore, for the temporary, and in some respects accidental promotion of this personage to a command for which his qualifications turn out to be unfortunately no longer *disputable*, it would really be still less candid to pronounce the English Ministers guilty of the failure of the enterprize, until they shall have identified themselves with Sir John Murray, by screening his incapacity from justice. Of this, so far as I can discover, they have not yet exhibited the smallest indication.

The siege committed to Sir John Murray was of unexampled consequence. On the fate of Tarragona hung that of Suchet. Had this officer (unrivalled in the French service, except by Soult,) been cut off, as was expected, on his route to France, 30,000 incomparable troops must have perished with him. The separate corps of Clausel and Decaen, amounting in the total to little more than 20,000 men, would then, unsupported, have had to maintain or abandon the Spanish contest. No prospect now exists of intercepting these forces—or of impeding any movements by which a junction may be formed,—a junction which may place under Suchet's orders an army of veterans, 50,000 strong. With this band, however formidable, it is sufficiently manifest their judicious leader will hasten to gain the eastern passes of the

Pyrennees*. Lord Wellington, after leaving a competent force in the hands of Generals Hill and Graham, may probably have, disposeable, an effective corps, of from 45 to 50,000 men—independent of Lord William Bentinck. To this gallant officer the British Chief may assign the reduction of all the fortresses from Tortosa north-eastward to Figueras—and march in person to molest the retreat, or frustrate the return of Suchet. Speculations in war, by those who are remote from the scene of action, must ever be taken, subject to local views which they cannot penetrate, and to contingencies of fortune which it would be worse than arrogant to disregard. But were we to guess from the data presented to us, what is likely to be the approaching condition of this campaign, one may predict without much seeming credulity, that if France herself should not become the theatre of fierce and desolating warfare, the forbear-

* It appears that we had underrated, in this country, the force of Suchet—and not adverted with due care to certain unavoidable defects, in the structure and composition of the Sicilian army.—It is now proved that Suchet has been all along, in the open field, too powerful an antagonist for the force from Sicily, whether under Sir John Murray or Lord Wm. Bentinck. That corps has, nevertheless, been of incalculable service in obstructing and embarrassing the French army of Catalonia, which might otherwise have detached liberally in aid of Soult. It is my sincere hope, that the circumstances above mentioned, with perhaps some other considerations not yet offered to the public eye, may have actually been of sufficient weight to justify the officer now on trial, for an act to which the people of England were abundantly prompt in affixing criminality and disgrace.

ance to inflict upon her so merited a retribution will proceed rather from the *policy* of Lord Wellington, than from his weakness*.

As one of those who with pain remember the early stages of the revolutionary war—I deprecate—most sincerely, most solemnly deprecate—a second invasion of the old French provinces. Repel her attacks—defeat her aggressions—strip her stark-naked of her conquests and her spoils,—but in the name of experience, of wisdom, and of human happiness—pass not the frontier—leave France herself untouched.

The safety, and sanctity of the soil of France, are rooted in the hearts of Frenchmen. The genius of the Revolution had already languished, when it was revived by the folly of the Continental Powers. Have we not enough of French enthusiasm? Flanders, and Italy, and Switzerland, and Holland, are its fruits. Has the age of that enthusiasm yet passed away? No: its form, indeed, has undergone some change,—the passion for liberty has been succeeded by the love of military glory; and the nation once roused by the fear of servitude, may again be electrified by the stimulus of dishonour.

We reckon, it seems, on the embarrassments of Buonaparte—on the drain of men—the absence of money—the convulsions growing, multiplying, and incurable, which must be engendered by the alliance

* Marshal Soult did not then believe in the truth of this conjecture.

of famine with conscription ; by measures which drag to a beaten and disaffected camp the stripling who sows the half-laboured field, or gathers the penurious harvest. I will now but glance upon this theme. We have at all times consoled ourselves for the defeat and ruin of our Allies, in every part of Europe, by dreams of conspiracy and counter-revolution against the person of Napoleon. I say nothing of the manliness or wisdom of such hopes : my only purpose is to insist that a violation of the French territory would be their natural overthrow. If false, it would render them ridiculous—if real, by it they must necessarily be dissolved.

A violation of the French territory would be a signal for the instantaneous composure of every discord—for the oblivion of hardship—the postponement of remonstrance—the re-union and re-excitement of a tremendous race. The ablest warrior of France would be no longer the upstart tyrant, odious for his energies—and precarious in the tenure by which he held his life. The passage of an army—above all an English army—over the Rhine, the Alps, or the Pyrennees, would do more for Buonaparte than ages of prosperity, or whole worlds of foreign conquest : it would transform him in a moment from the usurper feared or hated, to the most admired and popular chieftain of a warlike nation. They would behold him in no other light than as the heroic defender of the great Monarchy of France—august in her attributes of integrity, pre-eminence, and dominion,—against the aboriginal and eternal foes to her

name and being. Plebeian, Tyrant, and Corsican though he is, the weight of his sceptre would be forgotten in the edge of his sword; and we should supply him with the only weapon which he has never yet wielded,—*the heart* of an impassioned people.

It has hitherto been the play of the Confederated Powers to separate Buonaparte from the French nation, and to overturn him by the re-action of his own subjects;—that game, whether ill conceived or mismanaged, has everlastingly failed. But the opposite system would be of easy execution;—nothing more infallible than the certainty of throwing the people of France into the arms of Napoleon, by making their country the seat of war. Nor would the dangers of such an enterprise be terminated by its miscarriage. The wild fever of democracy which repulsed the invaders of 1794, degenerated into a phrenzy of invasion to which they in their turn fell victims. The fermented spirit burst out, and overspread the earth. Let a British force encamp upon the Garonne,—and France will again exhibit wonders equal to those of the Revolution. Military enthusiasm will then discharge the functions of democratic enthusiasm. Millions of soldiers will rally round the Imperial Eagle as millions of citizens danced under the tree of Liberty;—and the impulse given to the vassals of an adventurer, in defence of that soil which his crimes have laid waste, will furnish him with inexhaustible resources for unhallowed and unlimited aggression.

The comprehensive judgment, and searching forecast of Lord Wellington, have never confined themselves to calculations purely military. The moral springs of national power have long been familiar to him. Should he resolve on hoisting the British standard within the fields of Gascony, I shall regard it as a proof, not that my conclusions are erroneous, but that my premises are false—that the character of France has changed with her misfortunes—and that the entrance of a foreign enemy is hailed by her inhabitants as the signal for revolt.

On these principles, the movements of the British General must henceforth be eyed with extraordinary interest. They will not only develop the relative strength of the armies, but they may be in some measure relied upon as a touchstone of the stability and harmony attributed by a mind of no common order, and with advantages peculiarly its own, to that mysterious edifice—the *Imperial Government* of Buonaparte*.

* Lord Wellington “has reared the British Standard” within the fields of Gascony. The universal sweep of the French physical force into Germany enabled him to advance beyond the frontier,—the utter demolition of that force has enabled him to remain there—has extinguished apparently the martial spirit of France—and has evidently snatched from the hands of her Government the whole body of veterans who best compose the frame and element of future armies. The humanity and justice of Lord Wellington, likewise, have taken away all terror from invasion—while the defeats and increased severities of Buonaparte have detached the confidence and admiration of his subjects. I believe it to be an unquestioned fact, that when the British troops were

To pass the French frontier, if my opinions be just, were nothing better than to raise new legions for the Corsican; and to encounter the torrent of an angry population, whose overflowings would again suffice to inundate the Spanish provinces with blood. Reflections such as these may help to mitigate the impatience now beginning to shew itself, in some of our sanguine countrymen. They must consider the subject with reference not to honest wishes, but to calm discretion, and to the nature of things.

Wrest the Spanish fortresses from the Invaders. Restore the works which they have ruined. Fill them with brave and faithful garrisons, with ample magazines, and warlike stores*. Seize and secure the passes of the Pyrennees. Lay the foundation of a solid revenue. Frame the outline, and establish the first principles of a regular and formidable army. Teach our friends that it is as necessary to be on their guard against surprise, as to make themselves an overmatch for violence. Having done all this, and not before, you have indeed been the Saviours of Spain. Neglect any one of these precautions—or betray them to the glittering but fallacious project

charging the enemy through a village—they were loudly cheered by the French peasantry themselves. If one were justified in founding a general deduction on a single circumstance—it would appear from this statement that the *Corsican Dynasty is at an end*; and such an occurrence, we must observe, could hardly have proceeded from local causes.

* *Quere*—Have these essential measures been yet taken—or begun upon, by the Spanish Government?

of carrying *retaliation* into the bosom of France,—
 you but imitate the errors which Providence has
 enabled you to chastise—and provoke, from a beaten
 enemy, the punishment which you have yourselves
 inflicted.

VETUS.

LETTER XXVII.

*Invasions of Russia—of Spain—of France—War
System of Buonaparte—Internal State of France.*

SIR,

AUG. 2, 1813.

THE possibility of an attack upon the French Empire, on the side of its Pyrennean provinces, is forced into our notice by the actual state of the campaign. As a question of policy, it cannot fail to interest us, even when superseded by the question of power; and, until we are checked by the host of obstacels now apparently rising to rebuke our first conception of such an enterprise, it is difficult to imagine a more important subject of meditation than the consequences of which it might be productive.

I am the less unwilling to indulge awhile upon this topic, because it is a direct and obvious branch from that great fountain of observation, the general conduct of the war,—a war long since so fruitful of enquiry into the adaptation of means to ends,—of efforts and events, to emergencies and to seasons.

The advocates for an invasion of the South of France rest upon two positions—

1st. That the Southern frontier being evidently her weakest point,—and wholly destitute of fortified places,—will require a proportionate increase of troops for its defence.

2d. That the present Ruler is universally odious to the people of the Southern departments, who wait only the support of a foreign force to overturn his usurped authority.

The first of these arguments is chiefly addressed to the consideration of military men,—the second to that of Statesmen; but they are sufficiently shaded off into each other to be treated as members of the same piece, and subjects of a joint discussion.

There is no class of human enterprises to be compared with those of war, for the nice and intricate calculations which they require. There are, unfortunately, no species of attempts which so frequently proceed from headlong passion. Nor is it to men of shallow intellect that we are beholden for the evidence of this striking truth. Men of the highest intellectual powers are often a prey to the most furious passions. The wild excesses and baffled phrenzies of genius, disordered by ambition, would lay the possessor of it prostrate at our feet;—but, incapable as we are of more exalted rivalship, we restore the superiority from which he fell, by imitating the errors which had betrayed him.

To profit by the faults of a defeated enemy, is the wisest use of experience gained in the least expensive manner. Two distinct, though cotemporary occasions, for this happy exercise of prudence and experience, have offered themselves to us almost within the passing hour. Two lessons, pregnant at least with instruction to future ages, if not with benefit to our own, have been vouchsafed by Providence at

both extremities of Europe—Russia, by her re-established Empire, and Spain by her vindicated honour, stand immortal records of outrage chastised with dignity,—and of vengeance inflicted on atrocious crimes. What, then, are the lessons, what the principles of military action, deducible from these extraordinary passages in the annals of ambition? They are numberless, and of inestimable value. We may be satisfied with stating, in the simplest form, one which seems most applicable to our present prospects,—namely,—that a Power of the first order, whose people and Government are faithful to their duty, cannot *now* be *invaded* with success.

Austria and Prussia are no exceptions. The nation, in both cases, remained unmoved. The Court was intimidated or corrupted. Spain and Russia are the true precedents, which confirm and fortify the doctrine revived by the invasion of revolutionary France herself. They eminently illustrate the lesson which she taught us, inasmuch as they have exhibited the same results, with feebler means, against more pressing dangers*.

* The fixed purpose of this letter is to damp the determination of invading France. As in private life it is an unerring rule of prudence to change place with our neighbours, and argue for ourselves in the third person—the author has here insisted on the applicability of reasonings drawn from the disastrous enterprizes of France, to the interests and actions of this country and her allies. Perhaps it ought to have been formally noticed in the argument, that the calamities which had befallen that power, must so enfeeble and waste her strength, as to render it doubtful whe-

There is a curious fecility in the combination of proof afforded to the world by these two memorable instances of the fate which we may pronounce almost inevitably attendant on the project of *conquering* a first-rate Power. Russia and the Peninsula not only laboured under many fixed and inherent disadvantages, but, from the circumstances under which they were attacked by Buonaparte, they may be said to have embraced the whole subject of foreign invasion,—to have comprehended the extreme varieties of those occasional and artificial aids, which could be presumed at any time to prosper the hopes of an invader, and to shake those principles on which our general reasonings are erected.

The defensive means of any State, that is to say those means which are most efficacious and important, may be mainly resolved into the density of its population. But the inhabitants of the Russian Empire are more dispersed than any people of the ancient world.

The produce of industry,—the acquisition of sciences* directly applicable to the useful arts,—the growth of general knowledge which goes to mul-

ther she did not rather present us with a fair temptation to make her the subject of such an experiment, than with any reasonable admonition to avoid it.

* In the most polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind “has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.”

GIBBON.

tiply the human powers, and which, in most of its branches, is remotely or immediately relative to the art of war,—few of these could be fairly enumerated amongst the resources of Russia. There was not, it is true, an excess of refinement, to unnerve or dissolve her strength,—but there was not, on the other hand, a progress of civilization, by which it might be matured and developed.

Without putting unlimited faith in the necromancy of banks and budgets, or confining political salvation to affluent communities, we must regard the state of the Muscovite Exchequer as a deplorable ingredient in the national weakness. It is not simple poverty that has depressed the force of Alexander. His imperial Government has inverted and confounded the successive stages of the financial system. Under him and his predecessors the art of borrowing has been exhausted, while the objects of taxation were inaccessible, and its nature imperfectly known. Thus panting under a load of preliminary debt, their Ministers have “toiled in vain” after a revenue which flies before them. Thus public credit throughout the Russian Empire dies of premature old age; whilst the noble science of political economy, driven from its proper field of exercise, and defrauded of its natural food, has in early childhood degenerated or perished.

The frontier provinces under the Russian sway were late and turbulent acquisitions; difficult to retain in subjection,—more difficult to defend when attacked. These provinces constituted the most populous and

fertile portions of the Imperial territory. They fell an instantaneous prey to Napoleon, whose progress they assisted, while they fed and reinforced his legions, and thus became incorporated with the living mass of destruction which he hurled upon their devoted masters.

But Russia had not merely to contend with the vices proper to her situation. The great advantages which belonged to it were familiar to an enemy, who made studious and terrible provision against them.

The prodigious space between the Rhine and the Niemen was alone an effectual defence to Alexander, had the war been dependant on French resources—or had the lines of operation proceeded even from the Oder. Buonaparte grappled with this obstruction;—the stream of the Vistula was taught to flow within the pliant limits of his empire,—and the magazines and resources of French hostility were transported to the threshold of Moscow.

The giant strength of a vast but scattered population, dreadful when united, though difficult to unite, must be broken by a force yet more gigantic, or the invasion was utterly hopeless and insane. Here, too, was Russia stripped of her natural superiority. The tide of French despotism rolling on, swept before it the armed youth of the Rhenish Confederation; with the indignant veterans of Austria and of Prussia, Sixty thousand effective cavalry—unheard of but in the armies of the East,—three hundred thousand disciplined infantry—a number unrivalled since the

crusades—but in quality and composition more nearly resembling the bands of Cæsar than the desultory champions of the Cross,—formed altogether an host of warriors, far beyond any embodied armament discoverable in the records of Imperial Rome, of the middle ages, or of modern Europe.

But the genius of the Corsican was not more intent on wresting away the advantages enjoyed by Russia, than on curing the evils ordinarily incidental to the nature of the force with which he threatened her. All extensive alliances—all complex coalitions—are feeble on a comparison of their efficacy with their bulk. The motley power led on by Buonaparte was, above every other of which we have read, impregnated with the seeds of dissolution. The tools of his ambition had already been its victims. Their feelings towards him were invariably those of hatred and revenge. Their best interests were permanently adverse to their oppressor. Their arms had been but recently lifted up for his overthrow,—and the triumph of the enterprise to which he now compelled them would be the seal of their everlasting slavery. These terrors, likewise, he overcame. He treated those whom he distrusted, not as auxiliaries, but as subjects,—he seized and garrisoned their strongest cities—devoured the resources which might have been turned against him—and by the absolute authority which he assumed, he imparted to this refractory and discordant multitude, if not the spirit of harmony, at least the habit of subordination, which until his arms began to recede, and his fortunes to tremble, never

once disputed his most arbitrary order—or deserted his odious cause. Such were the measures adopted by Buonaparte—such the discouragements he surmounted, and the positive ascendancies that he enjoyed,—such the absolute or relative embarrassments by which Russia was enveloped. What, then, has been the end of the Invader? Has he won the sceptre of the Czar? Utter ruin! Ruin of a magnitude unknown to History. Famine and the sword,—and frost, and fire,—every engine of God and man, have been enlisted amongst the elements of his destruction. Vain and superfluous ingenuity! His fate was independent of frost or fire. The conflagration of Moscow hastened the flight of Buonaparte. Had the city stood, he would have held it until flight was unattainable. The human weapons of hunger and the sword, modes of vengeance which all great nations can inflict when they please, on their oppressors,—these were incessantly gathering round him. Another month would have stormed the barracks of Napoleon, —sparing to his harassed soldiers their desolate and fruitless march,—and to Europe the calamity of his personal release from bondage. The moral of this narrative will appear in its place.

Spain has furnished a yet more striking example of the final impotency of most direct attacks upon the Sovereignty of an independent and united people. Less populous than Russia,—less inured to battle,—under the very eye and finger of France,—divested of her troops, her treasures, and her Government, she was marked out by the tyrant for an unresisting

prey. The Kingdoms of the Peninsula were, by nature or bad fortune, destitute of many advantages which Russia enjoyed, or of which she had been abridged by the unrelenting genius of Buonaparte. Russia had ample time for preparation. In the case of the unsuspecting Spaniards, abandoned perfidy was added to ferocious power; and before the nation could dream that they had an enemy to contend with, their most important garrisons had already fallen.

With the early disgraces, indecisions, retrocessions, languor, and recent progress of this interesting war, we are enough acquainted. In spite of jealousy,—of divided authority,—of timid councils,—and unequal force,—the soil of the Peninsula is, after a five years' experiment, all but cleared of its oppressors.

The fatal issue of these outrageous attempts, of which it is my design to notice, not the wickedness, but the folly, is in itself a solemn warning, equally to Napoleon, and to us. One substantial blessing has sprung from the bosom of those miseries which he inflicted upon the North of Europe—the Russian Empire stands secure, an unshaken bar to the scheme of universal conquest. The affairs of the Peninsula do not less abound with happy prospects, or with serious admonitions. If Spain and England are capable of assigning limits to the progress of usurpation in the South, it is to the indiscretion of France herself they owe the display and moral influence of that power. Yet in the face of facts like these, while Buonaparte and the worn-out associates of his disgrace came

away reeking evidences of the madness through which they had provoked it—those masters in the school of war and wisdom—those who volunteer the part of scribes and retainers to men in office, cried aloud for an imitation of the model, so exposed to ridicule and reproach. They who witnessed and exulted in the series of disasters called down upon France by her campaigns upon the Boristhenes, could advise nothing better for the interests of the Coalition than a similar knight-errantry on the Rhine*! The passage of the Rhine!—Maniac! an invasion of the Moon! Is the name of Vauban unknown to us—or the triple frontier—or the abortive splendour of Marlborough—or the ponderous imbecility of the Coalition of 1793? Is it the prolific fancy of an English Enthusiast that can generate 100,000 men to form the siege of Landau, Mentz, and Luxemburgh, before they set foot upon the old French frontier—and five hundred thousand more to cover

* This was before a single fortress in Poland or Germany had fallen into the hands of the Allies (that is of Russia and Prussia only), or been regularly invested by them, and certainly before a sufficient army had been assembled to gain a battle in Saxony over the wreck of the French forces, that is, before the adverse (though bloody and glorious) battles of Lutzen and Bautzen had been fought.

The confederate powers have now crossed the Rhine through the South of Germany, in order to escape the endless and intolerable task of grappling with the iron frontier. But this (invasion by the South) it was utterly impossible to attempt, with a Russian army more than half exhausted—a Prussian army not yet formed—and while Austria and Bavaria were the active Allies of France.

these sieges? While the fortresses of Prussia were still garrisoned by Frenchmen, what but a self-devotion like that of Curtius would plunge into the abysses of Burgundy or Cologne? It ill becomes those who, like Syrens, lured unhappy Hamburgh to her destruction,—who damped the blazing loyalty of Hanover,—and betrayed the cause of Europe on the Elbe and Oder,—it ill becomes such men to prattle about exploits upon the Rhine.—The post of England, in *this* campaign, was not amongst the passes of the Pyrennees.

But the madness of those who not long ago projected an invasion of France through the ribs of adamant which enclose her on the East, reduces the attempt upon her Southern provinces to a mild and venial absurdity. The latter may be reasoned with,—the other ought to be tied. Let us take for our text, these Southern provinces, and once more interrogate—what can we hope from an invasion? There is a principle silently but incessantly working in modern warfare, which, as it is severely felt in practice, ought seldom to be omitted in our reasonings. It is the vast apparatus of supplies and equipments, by no means less essential to *modern* war than the men and arms which they are destined to feed and set in motion. The contrast in this respect between us and our distant ancestors is a beautiful subject, but the discussion of it would now be misplaced. We may be satisfied with observing the effects of this circumstance in its tendency to counteract the extreme vicissitudes of war, and to impair the fruits of victory.

A beaten army falls back upon its resources ;—the conqueror who pursues it, “ drags after him a lengthening chain.” We seem willing enough to take advantage of all such consolatory topics, on the few occasions whereon we ourselves are worsted, or when, as it happens much more frequently, after gaining a battle, we are forced to retreat. At such times there is hardly a club in London that does not ring with loud and sturdy dissertations, on the wisdom, nay, on the happiness of retiring, to safe positions and abundant magazines. But to retreating Frenchmen we allow neither safety nor abundance. The same arguments which serve to restore our fortunes are ruinous when applied to Buonaparte !

This characteristic of European war, ultimately attendant on the discovery of gunpowder, and directly adverse to the production of great and rapid results, would have interposed a serious obstacle to the schemes of conquest cherished by Buonaparte, who must have abandoned his system of unlimited encroachment, or made it support *itself*. A new era, therefore, was created in the military art, that the genius of modern armies might no longer be inconsistent with events and revolutions decisive as those of antiquity. To this end it was indispensable that the military operations of France should be carried on with equal ease in all parts of Europe ;—that a French army, a thousand miles from home, should still be in the centre of its resources ;—that the wealth and produce of every soil on which these hordes were encamped should be absolutely and inexorably ap-

appropriated to their maintenance; and each country, whose welfare was its only crime, should thus feed and perpetuate its own desolation. Here is the simple paraphrase of the favourite barbarism—"war supporting war." On these principles it was not enough that immense armies were kept at little or no expense,—they were in a state of unremitted exercise—their defeats were *less* fatal and exhausting to themselves, than those of other nations,—their victories were the means of multiplying victory,—the States which they occupied, stript of common sustenance for their inhabitants, were utterly disabled from raising or supporting troops for the expulsion of their oppressors,—the States which they yet forbore to occupy were unceasingly menaced,—and France herself, if unruly, retained in slavery, by the knowledge of their existence, and the dread of their return.

So long as the other Governments of Europe refrained from the adoption of this cruel, but successful system, it is plain that through a series of extensive struggles, they could make no stand against the legions of Buonaparte. England, of all countries, would be the last to follow his example. In the Peninsula, above every other scene of action, such a measure would be inexpedient and unwise. The Spanish troops themselves were not maintained by contribution,—and in a friendly country, and as candidates for popular feeling, it would have been a glaring treachery to our own professions and our prospects.

But the system of robbery was less beneficial to Napoleon, when applied to Spain, than to most other kingdoms of Europe. Without the power of keeping a force concentrated for battle, it was almost impossible for them to derive the permanent fruits of victory. Their troops, in a country which is very much fed by importation, could not be long in a collective body: so the advantages gained by fighting the Spaniards were lost by the necessary dispersions of the French. The British Army, masters of the sea, drew their subsistence by water. This gave us, with inferior numbers, a force, on many critical occasions, more efficient than that of the enemy, and has told more or less at every period of the war. The Northern provinces into which the enemy were recently driven, have been inconceivably reduced and exhausted;—the supplies, therefore, of the Invaders in Arragon and Navarre have been derived through slow, expensive, and precarious convoys from the French territory. War no longer “supported war;” and the defeat of Joseph has had upon the remnant of his host the same effects as if the new system had never been invented,—it has thrown them back towards the seat of their resources, and for the remainder of this Campaign, the choice of ground will be, *cæteris paribus*, favourable to the enemy, in proportion as it shall be contiguous to France.

Undoubtedly the frontier towns of the Peninsula must be rescued, or there is yet no security for Spanish freedom. Pampluna, St. Sebastian’s, and Bar-

celona, must be carried, or we must again retire. I trust, therefore, it will not be assumed that my general arguments as to the theatre of war have any tendency to call in question the fitness of a mere irruption into France, for the immediate pursuit or annoyance of a beaten enemy,—for the sake of removing him to a distance from the fortresses besieged,—or for any other purpose *subordinate* to the grand consummation of their surrender. Movements of that nature might be essential, and of course legitimate branches of a campaign for the recovery of the Spanish frontier,—they would be limited to its exigencies, and terminated by its issue. That is not the question.

Unless I am misinformed, there exists in certain quarters a strong appetite for a descent upon France itself,—an original and independent enterprize,—not auxiliary to the Spanish contest,—nor for any specific or well described object,—but simply, as something magnificent and fine. Upon this piece of heroism let us first remember—“*Facilis descensus Averni.*”

Since what age of the full-grown monarchy of France has any recorded invasion of that country been successful?—when, since fire-arms were brought into use, and numbers began to prevail over personal prowess? How often were her southern provinces made the aim or theatre of hostility by Charles the Vth? How many Spanish and German corpses fattened the plains of Provence? Brave men, who perished by successive multitudes,—when Spaniards and Germans were the boast of Europe—warriors who had

gained a military renown not excelled in the days of Trajan? Yet Charles the Vth had England for an occasional ally,—he had Italy and Spain within his Empire,—joint possessions, which would enable him to direct his invading force against either the south-eastern or south-western frontier; or to combine his movements, and attack both flanks at once. Nothing in history more abounds with proof of the repulsive faculties of the French people than the series of disasters inflicted on this first potentate of the world, in his vain though violent efforts upon the weakest points within their line. The French armies, now possessed of Italy, enjoy the means of turning to the ruin of any hostile force, local advantages, the converse of those which were placed in the hands of Charles. Do we advance towards Bordeaux?—the troops from Catalonia, from Toulon, or the borders of Piedmont, intercept our flight. Do we gaze after “British objects,” bending our march against the docks and fleets of Toulon?—we offer our flank to the whole French nation!

But haply we calculate on the discontents and divisions of France, and seek to bestow upon her the blessings of a counter-revolution. A counter-revolution! In whose favour? In favour of the House of Bourbon? And where is now the interest of the House of Bourbon? What hold have that family over the generation which comprises at the present moment all the energy, ability, and practical influence of France? The man of five-and-thirty in the present

year, was in 1793* a boy of 15. What then were the passions universally prevalent amongst the French *youth* of that memorable era? Were they not revolutionary passions? But were they transient? Did any general movement of the national mind ever at any period since the year 1793 bespeak a crisis favourable to the restoration of the old Dynasty? If so, with what spirit has it operated, and in what form has it appeared? Amidst all the changes, caprices, and revulsions of public feeling,—from the Girondist to the Jacobin—from the Directory to the Consulate,—from democracy wild and savage, to the glittering and cutting despotism of the sword—the single eccentricity from which the mass of the French people seem to have been obstinately and even curiously exempt, was a taste for their former masters,—Bourbonism only, has never been in fashion. About the date of the first coalition, it would have been possible, it might have been easy, for Princes who acted like men of honour, to revive the fortunes of the exiled Sovereign. That gleam of sunshine passed away, and with it perished every seed of future expectation. The base cupidity, the shallow perfidy, of each, without exception, of the allied Powers, unveiled the true character of their Imperial and Royal interference,—leaving a deep impression on the hearts of all who could feel or fight for the integrity of France,—and sealing finally the condition of the House of Bourbon.

* See a striking article on this point in the *Edinburgh Review*. I cannot turn to the exact number of that unrivalled work.

But let us, if not from sentiment, at least from prudence, speak candidly of him with whom we contend—since it is even more a dangerous, than a pitiful indulgence, to exaggerate the perils which encompass him.

We are invariably prone to fancy that others feel as we do. It is not peculiar to the people of England: Every nation of Europe which has suffered from the craft or violence of Buonaparte, has soothed itself by supposing that he was equally detested by the French—and that any effort for the subversion of his Government would be seconded by the prayers of his subjects. Now fact and reason conspire to banish these dreams—and clear away this vapour of the imagination. Buonaparte, the most ambitious, but the ablest of men, has been the most flagrant of usurpers. He extinguished every spark of liberty in France—but he quenched the flames of civil war which had devoured her. So stands his title in the archives of French misfortune—Tyranny raised on the ruins of Anarchy:—Strange that the legitimacy of such a title should be most condemned—and the fragility of such a power most asserted—by those whose fabric of policy rests on the single principle—that freedom is in all cases overpaid by revolution.

Buonaparte is indeed a tyrant—but he is a tyrant who tolerates no tyranny except his own; no local monarchs in the distant provinces of his empire. The higher ranks who once exercised and abused the hereditary rights (as they were called) of feudal exaction, jurisdiction, and petty despotism, exist no longer

in substance or in form. The persons most exalted by this arbitrary legislator have no shadow of personal jurisdiction or authority, above any other class of subjects ;—the laws are alike inexorable—but open alike to all. Invested with well defined military power, the gaudiest Marshal is compelled to practise the most entire military submission. The path of military eminence is the only one now left for an aspiring Frenchman. Hence unquestionably the whole of that portion of society whose pursuits and attainments might, under a free constitution, dispose or qualify them for political life, may be presumed to murmur against a species of government which levels their pretensions with the dust. Of that class, however, which, under the stern autocracy of a soldier, could in point of moral influence be next to nothing, and in physical efficacy less than nothing, the numbers are dwindling, and the spirit is gone. The out-port merchants are equally humbled,—the manufacturing body in most of its members has rather gained by the Continental System, since it relieves them from the competition of foreign manufacturers. The lower artisans, but, above all, the peasantry, have not only been made sensible of a comparative amendment in their condition, by the fall of those privileged orders before whom they once hardly dared to stand,—but they enjoy an actual release from many grievous and detailed oppressions, annexed to the existence of the old nobility. The law of the Conscription is said to be a sword suspended over the head of Buonaparte. But the Conscription, intolerable to the affluent and

well-educated, diminishes in weight as it descends in fortune. The multitude do not feel it much. It unfolds to the youngest son of the poorest labourer the chance of plunder,—the prospect of promotion,—the most dazzling honours known to Imperial France, a Marshal's staff and a military dukedom. We greatly misconceive the present French character, if we pronounce it insensible to warlike renown. Never in the brightest ages of the ancient monarchy was the service carried on with a better spirit—its fatigues endured with more exemplary patience—its dangers faced with loftier heroism—or its rewards more ardently anticipated. The army in France is decidedly popular. It is the study of the Government to make the French soldiery respected and esteemed by their countrymen. The private grenadiers of the line will enter into and converse in the first coffee-houses of Paris. They are not without money. Courtied and elevated beyond every other class of inhabitants, they are nevertheless controlled by the most peremptory discipline. In foreign countries the French soldier is a merciless and remorseless barbarian,—a robber and a ravisher, without scruple, or punishment, or reproach. No contrast can be more extraordinary than between his demeanour at home, and when he passes the French frontier. In home quarters, or on his march through the towns and villages of France, his whole deportment towards the native inhabitants is an example of courtesy, complaisance, and temper, which he is strictly enjoined to observe, and which he piques himself on observing,—or violates only to

prepare for an ignominious death. Thus unhallowed power contrives to mitigate the evils which are necessary to its existence. Thus are lightened, in some degree, the chains of abject servitude. Thus has the subtilty of extreme despotism infused into the bitter draught which it administers an ingredient elsewhere more beneficently provided by the cares and the jealousies of freedom.

But he who keeps down that host of bad passions, which, if let loose upon France herself, would recal the anarchy from which he rescued her, spurs and inflames them against all other countries. His soldiers are his brethren in oppression. To foreign States he is a destroyer. To France he appears but as a conqueror. To suppose the French nation unmoved by the love of sway,—or undazzled by the splendours of reiterated triumph,—would be to divest them not only of those passions which pervade most extensive political communities, but of a train of strong emotions, which have animated and distinguished in every age the national character of Frenchmen. So far, then, from hoping for the sympathy of France, in the complaints and sufferings of the rest of Europe, I am much afraid it would be more accurate to consider the crimes of Napoleon against the remainder of mankind, as merits in the eyes of his vain and warlike subjects. What proof have we from recent facts, that any reliance can be placed on the disaffection of France towards Buonaparte? Are the Conscripts rendered desperate by conscription,—or is not their conduct to be taken as a just specimen

of the bias of their countrymen towards the Government which enforces it? If so—how many instances have occurred of *desertion* on the part of *native Frenchmen*? We have heard of Foreigners deserting by hundreds—the French soldier, I believe, is eminently true,—ought we not, then, to regard the fidelity of the soldier under all his hardships, as some fair index of what we might expect from the nation out of which he emanates? The National Guards of the interior exceed a million of men. Can we discreetly reckon on their assistance? Marshal Soult, in his last dispatch, announces, that a certain proportion of them were already in arms, and prepared to oppose the English. Is Marshal Soult a man to be deceived?—or would he put muskets in the hands of enemies? The peasants of Gascony, too,—are they disaffected? They have shared with the troops the frontier duty. What can we desire? I do not deny that Louis the XVIIIth may have some thousand partizans in France. In England, so late as 45, there were many partizans of the Stewarts. I only insist that they would disappear at once before the vast body of those who exercise the powers of the modern Government, or who hope to rise through its protection. To this it may be unanswerably added—that any interference of the English nation would ruin the slender prospects of the Bourbon. Every honest Frenchman will judge by himself, that no honest Englishman can wish prosperity to France. Our declaration in favour of the banished Family might instantaneously convert each foe of Great Britain into the Friend of Buonaparte;

—on whose side, then, would be the prevalence of enthusiasm and of numbers?

So much for counter-revolution. But if conquest be the plan—is it our design to subjugate Gascony—or Languedoc—or Provence? Certainly, Napoleon, who seems so well disposed to sacrifice his 32d military division to the Allies, may be presumed, *a fortiori*, to throw away with even less reluctance these so much more recent acquisitions!—and to acquiesce with still more cheerfulness and patience in a concession of so little value as his southern frontier! If we would *bonâ fide* run away with these provinces, we had better pass an Act for dismembering France. To dismember France, nothing more would be necessary than to conquer her. “ ‘ * The conquest of “ France!—O tame and feeble Cervantes—with “ how timid a pencil, and in what faint colours, hast “ thou painted the portrait of a disordered imagination “ tion !”

VETUS.

* The apostrophe (if I recollect the language) of Mr. Fox—in his letter to the Electors of Westminster, about the year 1793—a lapse of 20 years, with no guide except memory, ought to make me afraid of misquoting him, but not of exaggerating his praise. For nervous language, and lucid argument, that pamphlet recurs to me as having *one* rival, namely, a speech of Demosthenes. My strong dissent from the Right Hon. Gentleman on some questions relating to the war, cannot entitle me to withhold my humble tribute from the master-piece—or from the master.

LETTER XXVIII.

Invasion of France.

SIR,

AUGUST 26, 1813.

THE arguments by which I would dissuade this country from attempting or encouraging an invasion of France, have been (though somewhat indirectly) considered as symptoms of *forbearance* towards the French people. Such a misconstruction it is more difficult to imagine, than to correct. The tone of my language—the drift of my reasoning—was studiously, and I had hoped successfully, calculated, to enforce the practice, not of lenity, but of prudence. It is not the vigour that would crush a dreadful enemy, which I condemn; nor the justice that would inflict on a race of impenitent criminals, the punishment due to their offences;—it is not in mercy to their unmanly selfishness, their shameless fraud, their ferocious insolence, or their worse than brutal inhumanity, that my nerve recoils from that mode of warfare against the slaves and associates of Buonaparte, so often miscalled “retaliation,” for their crimes. Could we lay waste every vineyard—and whirl the consuming firebrand through their proudest cities, and erect a trophy in every field, and decimate the manhood of a nation of destroyers, it would indeed be a just, though feeble vengeance, for

the miseries which they have brought upon the world. If we abstain from touching the French territory, it must be from a regard to the sufferings which we might endure, rather than to any which we should possess the means of inflicting. It is because other modes of retaliation may still be, but unquestionably ought by this time to have been, within our power—more adequate, more attainable, more permanent and secure.

We must revert to the subject of our late discussions *. This moment I learn, that in the evening of the day (Aug. 18) on which my last Letter appeared, the leading paper in the interest of his Majesty's Ministers took up the question to which I had directed your notice—namely, the expediency of invading France. The quarter whence the Ministerial dissertation proceeded, much more than the manner in which it was executed, requires, on my part, a few observations; and as it presents some obvious arguments, from which no reasonable being can withhold his concurrence, it is likewise incumbered with some straggling notions, which we are called upon to qualify or refute. "Some of Lord Wellington's military critics in this country," (say Ministers), "seem quite sure that he will not enter France. Why this project is so blameable, we profess ourselves utterly at a loss to discover. We never hear these persons think it absurd for Bu-

* This letter was provoked by a direct attack in the ministerial papers: whatever heat appears in it is that of controversy, not of political animosity.

“naparte to invade other countries, and make them
 “subsist his troops. Why, then, should not France,
 “the inflicter of an Iliad of woes, be made to feel
 “the evils of invasion herself?—she, who has im-
 “posed them upon every country upon the Con-
 “tinent? A descent into the South of France ap-
 “pears to us to be advisable in every point of view,
 “military and *moral*,” &c. &c.—(See the article in
 the *Courier*, August 18.)

To whose opinions these remarks were destined to apply, or whether (as seems probable) to the sentiments of Vetus, is of no importance. Let us at this, the most awful hour that has yet arrived for Europe, chase away all busy recollections, but of a common country, and a virtuous cause.

The merit of an attack upon the French territory depends on the purposes for which it is undertaken, and on the mode in which it is performed. But the illustrious Officer at the head of the allied arms has withdrawn from the jurisdiction of scepticism more than half its empire. The skill, and promptitude, and consummate ability, which pervade the whole of his executive system, have placed that department of the duties of Lord Wellington beyond our reach—almost above our comprehension; and left to him who would seek distinction as a critic, not only a vain, but a reproachful task. The points on which alone it now becomes us to exercise a free and anxious judgment are the *objects* of our Commander—not his actions. These objects must be taken as in great part presented to him, if not absolutely im-

posed upon him, by minds less infallible than his own; and as created, or powerfully affected at least, by the result and the authority of our domestic councils. I protest, therefore, against the possible imputation of arraigning or questioning the wisdom of Lord Wellington, though at all times ready to investigate, and to suspect the tendency of those measures, which may be adopted in his name.

Is it, then, because France, by the invasion of other countries, has inflicted upon them an "Iliad of woes," that we must necessarily visit that offending Power with the same description of classic vengeance? I grant that justice permits, that wisdom enjoins us to fill, brimfull, the measure of exemplary punishment. None but hypocrites or petty cavillers would dispute it. The nature, not the degree, of retribution, is the single point at issue. We are bound to consider as a regular preliminary to all such schemes of practical enterprize, how far it would be possible to accomplish them; and thus qualify ourselves for the decision, how far it would be politic to attempt them.

Has France upon the whole been a gainer by her appetite for invading certain countries, and "making them subsist her troops?" Character being totally out of the question, what has Buonaparte acquired in *solid strength*, by his two great invasions of Spain and Russia? Has he not *shared* the woes which he inflicted? Has he preserved the armies for which he levied subsistence on these countries? Where is the thrift, where the profit of that predatory system,

under which rather more than half a million of his soldiers have perished in the midst of plunder? True it is, that signal and terrible calamities have been the faithful associates of French invasion. But if the wretched instruments of these calamities have been universally overwhelmed,—if, in the very march and sweep of ruin which they perpetrated, the perpetrators themselves have been consumed,—can it be called a winning game which we are invited to practise? Is it an example so prosperous,—a precedent so lovely,—that we must close our eyes to the manifold perils of its adoption? Must the people of England be blind, in order to be brave? We are urged to imitate Buonaparte, for the sake of retaliating his injuries. I deplore and dread the imitation, as the sure means of enabling him to retaliate his own sufferings upon us. Here is the precise contrast between the Ministerial doctrines, and those which I am studious to inculcate. This project of retaliation is founded on the arithmetic of madness, and breathes the vengeance, not of courage, but despair.

And under what relative means and circumstances has such a theory of warfare been recommended? Nothing can be more uncandid than the assumption, that the unprincipled spirit indulged by Buonaparte of attacking other countries had never been censured as “absurd.” The express ground of reprehension which I had already taken, in arguing the latest and most formidable of his invasions, was “not their wickedness, but their folly.” Foolish,

because more fatal to himself than to those whose destruction he anticipated,—unspeakably more foolish, when held forth as examples to us! But let us make France the seat of war. How stands the argument? With all the disadvantages long since described as belonging to the nations of the Peninsula and of Russia, they both remain unsubdued. With natural and adventitious assistances beyond number, which fortune had heaped on the invader, what has been the sum of his achievements?—what the value of his discoveries? Three hundred thousand *Frenchmen* wasted in the South,—two hundred thousand famished in the North,—the martial spirit of the Spaniard revived—more than his ancient freedom restored—and the Russian empire proved to be invincible. Was there no retribution in this? So much for France as an invader.

France, unfortunately, as an invaded country, is not less qualified to instruct the world, than in her former character. But in that case, I fear she might admonish us by other means than her misfortunes. Exempt from those wants and weaknesses under which our Allies have laboured, she abounds in every defensive faculty of which they both are destitute. Her Government,—military in its frame, and energetic from necessity,—is in high, resolute, and unremitting action. Her revenues,—more burthensome, perhaps, from the absence of commercial capital and credit, but far better organized, more efficient and productive, than any system of finance in Europe, save that of England,—have this year

derived an immense accession of money from the sale of public property under various forms. Her population,—dense, intelligent, and warlike,—are, of all the known inhabitants of this earth, the most susceptible of keen and combined emotion,—the most rapidly convertible into disciplined and zealous soldiers. By what rule of theorizing, therefore, are we to maintain the consistency of an attack on such a people, by those who predicted, and truly predicted, the failure of that people in their attempts on more vulnerable enemies? When, of a mingled host of French and foreigners, amounting to more than 600,000 men, not one-fifth of the assailing body returned from Spain, and not one-tenth from beyond the Vistula, what hope can any rational being cherish of the impression to be produced by the limited forces of Lord Wellington? Instead of mimicking those follies which they are the first to condemn, let me once more beseech of Ministers to remember, that the same eternal principles of calculation which lead to truth when applied to the means and prospects of Buonaparte, cannot lead to error in the estimate of our own; and that, however we may act upon superior motives, we must be satisfied to reason by common rules.

As for the *moral* expediency of a descent into the southern provinces of France, so much insisted on by the English Government, my conclusions on that subject have been already stated. Whatever influence public sentiment may still be suffered to possess amongst a nation so bestridden by the military

genius of its Chief, it would probably receive from an invasion by the British arms a new impetus decisive of the contest. It is childish to boast, that "we may invade France because she is our enemy," &c. &c. When the right shall be questioned, let it be claimed. We have an indefeasible right to destroy France, if we can; but none at all to ruin the British and Spanish army. That, and that alone, is my reply to such "moral" argumentations.

But are we not too soon, or too late, with this discussion? Can Lord Wellington now justify my fears, or realize the sanguine dreams of Ministers? I cordially and warmly concur in the proposal of seizing so much of the hostile territory as may serve for an outwork to our operations within the Spanish frontier. If an advance, even beyond Bayonne, would help us to annihilate that nest and storehouse of aggression, I confess it would be a prize worth gaining, at the risk of another battle. The establishment of such a chain of posts upon the French line as might enable the British General to disappoint, or, at least, to observe any movements commenced or concerted by the enemy, is a measure also of high necessity towards the main and vital object, the future defence of the Peninsula. Upon such propositions, it is impossible for those who have the same interest to entertain a second feeling. But will the subject terminate here? Does the responsibility of the English Government merge in mere declarations of a right to invade France,—which has never been disputed,—while the more pressing business is still *sub judice*,

and our victorious General stands insecure of the very ground which he occupies in Spain? Ministers took credit, and obtained it from an approving nation, for the effort by which, at the commencement of this campaign, they enabled Lord Wellington to win the battle of Vittoria. It was, I acknowledge, a strain of generosity above the pitch of any but a sentimental Cabinet. The first occurrence of the present year was a practical refutation of all their doctrines in the last; and Vetus, whose knight-errantry was turned into solemn ridicule, for imagining (what the same Ministers have since effected) that England and her Allies could afford the means of encountering eighty thousand Frenchmen,—the same Vetus is now accused of timidity or forbearance, because he deprecates an assault upon France herself! Really there must be something mysterious in the science of military proportions. It may be a brilliant sort of heroism, but it is not a very sound discretion, that shrinks from common difficulties, and plunges into those which neither patience nor courage can surmount; or it may be deep and skilful policy to divert our observation from neglected duties, and fix it on adventures whose magnificence will dazzle, while the peril of undertaking them annexes impunity to disappointment.

I must observe, that if Ministers recommend the invasion of France, it rests with them, and with them only, to furnish the means of rendering that invasion successful. What, then, are the prospects they present to us? We have a right to ask, what reinforce-

ments has our great Captain received to assist him in executing this mighty measure. Now that he is to cope with the whole internal strength of the most formidable nation in Europe, how much stronger is his army than at its passage of the Ebro? It cannot be contended that the same force which may securely occupy a position in Spain will suffice to carry the war beyond the frontier,—from a friendly to a hostile soil—from a conflict with regular troops, always harassed and tormented by an inveterate population, to a series of conflicts with the same army of regulars, animated and supported by their own countrymen—a military race of innumerable soldiers, well organized and commanded for internal defence, supplying the wants, reinforcing the ranks, and aiding the operations of the enemy. Admitting, therefore, that the Allied Army was just strong enough at the opening of the campaign to support the war within the Spanish territory, it does not follow that, unless considerably reinforced, they would be in a condition to occupy the Southern provinces of France. What has been the probable amount of their reinforcements? What the proportion of their losses? The siege of Saint Sebastian's, with the battle of Vittoria, and the unparalleled triumphs of the Pyrennees, have cost the British and Portuguese only not less than 15,000 men. Fatigue and sickness, at a very moderate computation, have added 5,000 invalids to the number. The army immediately under Lord Wellington, therefore, not reckoning any recruits from England, would be weaker by 20,000 men than when

he encountered Jourdan. His effective strength on breaking up from Portugal might amount to upwards of 70,000. Reduced by service to 50,000, the Government have supplied him with (I hope) 5,000 more. His gross recruit, all quarters included, we may liberally estimate at 10,000 men; leaving him a force, *short by* 10,000, of that with which he commenced operations.

The French army, unquestionably, has lost more men in battle. The troops originally under Jourdan, reinforced, reformed, brought forward, and beaten, under Soult, would a short time after their recent calamities not exceed, but certainly * not much fall short of, the gross amount of the Allies. Considering, then, the scene of action,—the sieges to be carried on,—the proximity of Soult to his resources,—and the energy and celerity with which the disasters consequent on the day of Vittoria were repaired,—I ask, is this a moment to mock the people of England with the prospectus of campaigns in the South of France? It is a literal as well as a figurative *gasconade*. Where are the preparations for such assist-

* I will venture to calculate, and am open to correction—

The *newly formed* divisions of M. Soult's army would each consist, in the field of battle, of at least 7,200 men: of these divisions there were nine—total 64,800;—the reserve, under Villattes, would raise the infantry of Soult's army to upwards of 70,000 men; three divisions of cavalry, with a moderate proportion of artillery, would increase it by not less than 12,000 men. The losses near Pampluna, &c. we cannot *under-rate* at 20,000. There remain to Soult, besides National Guards—besides Conscripts—and with all France behind him—60,000 veterans in the field.

ance to Lord Wellington as will even preserve the footing he has gained in Navarre? For many months, unless I am misinformed, the regular troops on home service have approached, if not exceeded, the number of 45,000 men. Of these, 5,000 have been dispatched to the Peninsula, to make good a defalcation of three times five thousand! Is this their vigour? or is it a newly discovered policy which counsels us to *protract* the war in Spain? Ministers ought to remember, for if not, it is they alone who have forgotten, the controversies on this subject in 1812. They have now to discharge a double office—to execute their current duties, and to supply the omissions of the past. Sure I am, there is not an honest man in England who will refuse them his support, his applause, his hand and heart towards the accomplishment of any measures, not of mere declamatory bustle, but of substantial force, by which the gallant Officer to whom they have entrusted so much of their country's welfare, and on whom they have bestowed, I sincerely believe, their perfect confidence, may be enabled to crown with final and unqualified victory the course which he has yet to run. What more liberal boon can we propose, than our zealous aid in all their labours,—and a clear indemnity for every failure, where neither crime nor folly has provoked it? Had even the partial merits of this campaign been exhibited twelve months sooner, the 50,000,000*l.* just paid into the Bank would have settled the destinies of Europe. Now to relax, were to tread back each step that we have gained,—to forfeit every hard-

earned guinea,—to confess that we had wasted each heroic life,—and to tumble headlong down the precipice by which we have so gloriously, but so painfully ascended. Let us not weakly deceive ourselves, nor wickedly countenance a delusion of the people. If every marching regiment be not this instant sent to Spain, another year may see us once more within the bounds of Portugal,—50 more reluctant millions, and 20,000 more slaughtered heroes, may again lie buried amongst the mountains of Navarre,—until we sink under the weight of a useless, because an endless, contest,—whose demands in the aggregate we might have faced, but have suffered them to exhaust us by their succession,—and whose embarrassments we have but accumulated by our languid efforts to divide them.

VETUS.

LETTER XXIX.

Spain.

SIR,

SEPT. 19, 1813.

WHILE, at this wondrous crisis of the affairs of Europe, every English spirit throbs with agitation, or elates itself with hourly accessions of hope, it is a useful and honourable, though it may be a dangerous office, to temper the irritability of public feeling by some analysis of the sources whence all rational confidence must spring, and of the ends to which it ought to aspire.

Never has the present age enjoyed so fair a prospect of escaping from evils unworthily permitted. Never has the sting of the scorpion aimed so visibly at his own life,—or crime, purely by its mad excesses, hastened the period of its downfall.

By their novelty, by their magnitude, by their ambiguous and fearful progress, the transactions of the North have arrested a large portion—certainly not too large—of the solitudes of this country. The independent and enlightened perseverance of Alexander,—the fierce and desperate devotion of the Prussian Monarchy,—the bold yet circumspect and skilful activity of Bernadotte, which has calmed so many apprehensions,—the arrival of Moreau, whose value, if happily fate should spare him, and if his genius should be suffered to unfold itself, will be felt by

Buonaparte in the same proportion as by us,—these are materials of high promise, and of powerful interest to mankind. In the acts of Austria, unfortunately, we find less to applaud than to pity. Of strength unimpaired, but fallen in majesty, we should speak of her as of a friend, with habitual affection. She has, indeed, divested herself of all title to admiration or esteem. Her weak mediation procured a breathing time for Buonaparte, which was prolonged for his convenience, and terminated at his pleasure. In her accession to the cause of Europe, there is more of obvious and rigid necessity, than even of that tardy wisdom which has been called the attribute of her House. In her languid and ill-digested, though elaborate Manifesto, she delivers herself up to the historian as a tame and self-accusing expositress, of doubts, and fears, and mean dissemblings,—of merited mortifications, and unprincely griefs.

But Germany, that noble field of wise and honest enterprize for Great Britain, has not yet become the object of her active cares. The English Government has risked no second stake with posterity. Spain, which in their hands continues to be a theatre of action, must still to us be the subject of anxious observation. Though long and strenuously had we announced the approach of a crisis, which would deserve and demand the best efforts of England in the North of Europe, it was plainly not with a wish that she should forego, but that she might seasonably end, the Spanish contest. From the Pyrennees alone can we enjoy those bright prospects which spread beyond

the Peninsula. It is when the summit of the Pyrenees shall be a *secure* and *impregnable* spot, that the eye of Britain may behold from it without censure or obstruction the courses of the Danube, the Weser, and the Elbe,—and her unembarrassed mind revolve its ulterior duties.

Many times it has been my wish to support the *principles* of his Majesty's Ministers. To defend their principles, against their measures, has often been my reluctant and ungrateful task. There has now arrived a period of the Spanish struggle, when we are likely (I trust) to agree in both. It is impossible not to confess, and to rejoice in the confession, that many pernicious errors have been recently repaired,—that innumerable defects have been amply supplied,—that events have been anticipated,—and various succour duly and industriously provided. The growing influence of this country over the councils of the Spaniards has appeared in nothing more strongly, than in the consistency and harmony assumed of late by the different branches of the service, arising from the concentration of dispersed authorities in those hands where power can be most safely lodged, and by which alone the allied force can be efficaciously directed.

Were it ever excusable to promulgate apprehensions which we do not absolutely feel, it would be for the sake of instilling them into the hearts of Ministers, whose activity is for the most part in the exact ratio of their fears. Were it at this moment necessary to spur them into exertions of a bolder and more

energetic character than what are likely to spring from their view of the crisis, or their spontaneous zeal for the success of our sacred cause, the English language has no reproach which I would spare from delicacy to their feelings,—nor is there a glow of colouring, or a figure of description, which I would scruple to employ upon the dangers of futurity, from any regard to what my own reputation might suffer by the contingent charges of fallacy and unfairness, in seeing more than existed, or exaggerating what really appeared. After six campaigns of a contest into which Great Britain entered with military resources beyond calculation, and military instruments above all praise, that impatience is not unnatural, and ought not to be offensive, which calls upon Ministers to speed the flight of victory. The necessity for that call, I am willing to believe, has no longer the force which once appertained to it. One or two reflections on the nature of this war, with a slight and brief sketch of some of its more prominent occurrences, may be of advantage towards enabling us to estimate its present condition. When we shall be fairly abreast of our illustrious Leader, on the line to which he has advanced the events and operations of his warfare, we can with more regularity approach the wider field of action occupied by our Allies in the North. We can introduce more favourably the views which we entertain upon a subject, than which none more fruitful of emotion, of meditation, and of *hope*, has ever yet been offered to the heart or the intelligence of mankind.

The truth can hardly be told too often, that the possession of Spain and Portugal by the enemy would be equivalent to a power of invading the British dominions, to what extent, and with whatever frequency, they might desire. To me, their expulsion from every part of the Peninsula has appeared as if it rested on the same proofs, and as an interest to be followed up with the same vigour, as the defeat of any armament directed against the bosom of this empire. But if the liberation of Spain and Portugal were the true motive of English interference,—and I confess there seems to me no other on which it could be approved,—every consideration which goes to justify the war would still more forcibly recommend all practicable means of abridging it. The greatest sum of victory in the shortest space of time, is the manifest desideratum of war in general. But circumstances were not wanting in the Spanish quarrel, to arm this object with tenfold importance; and to render the dispatch and energy of our measures, not merely eligible modes of hostility, but essential means of success.

The popular enthusiasm by which every province of the Peninsula has been inflamed, was a passion more likely to be fierce than lasting. Most national movements, however skilfully guided, and generously fostered, are applicable to a great and transient crisis, rather than to long-continued and laborious services. By a protracted struggle within the Spanish frontier, we ran the risk of losing the benefit of these feelings, and of releasing the French from their operation. Of

this danger much was eventually realised. Much of that animation which to distant spectators appeared so intense and irresistible sunk under successive stages of suffering, or finally evaporated in empty boasting. It is just, indeed, to admit, that a character but little inferior followed. Jealousy of England died away with other mischievous or inefficient phrenzies. A sentiment less powerful than the original enthusiasm, but more tractable, improvable, and long-lived, has taken place; and whether actuating the Spaniard in council or in the field, has equally and gradually contributed to strengthen those measures which have been employed by us for his preservation. The ebbing of public enthusiasm, however, was severely felt in an opposite quarter. Had we commenced, as we have since proceeded, with powerful armies, and with a series of victories, we should have maintained the national sentiment at its highest pitch. Spain is now more alive than ever,—raised from suspended sensibility by our triumphs. It would have cost us less to nourish, than to revive that spirit. But we are told by Ministers, that the necessary consequence of the complete organization, and of the prolonged dominion of Soult in the southern provinces, was the total decay of patriotic feeling, and the establishment by that officer of a species of secure authority, more resembling that of an ancient and legitimate administration, than of a recent conquest, and a predatory chief. Here, then, was one effect of the erroneous policy, or the defective energy, of the British Government;—here a palpable illustra-

tion of the merits and tendencies of lingering warfare, amongst an untried people.

The troops of Buonaparte subsist on plunder. In all countries, whether amicable or hostile, requisition supplies him with the means of conquering or of protecting. He fights, therefore, at small expense. But Spain, which by Napoleon was treated as an enemy, and an enemy whom it had been a favourite part of his system to impoverish as well as to subdue,—Spain must by us be regarded as an ally—not only held sacred in all her resources, but fed and supported from English funds. With such an inequality in the very origin and constitution of this contest, is it not evident that from each campaign, the disproportion of expenditure must be progressive? Is it not clear as light, that between two antagonists,—one of whom goes to law for nothing, while the other maintains his suit by borrowing at a grievous loss,—it becomes the plain interest of the former to delay, and of the borrower, by every conceivable device, to accelerate and terminate the issue?

This argument derives new force from the certainty, that a few thousand men, or a moderate sum of money, bearing a small proportion to the gross amount, may in most cases change the whole aspect of the operations, and make the difference between a triumphant and a disastrous war.

Our Peninsular alliance partakes of the nature, though it has not borne the name, of a Coalition. In most coalitions the seeds of discord are as numerous as the parties who compose them. It may, therefore,

be assigned as the standing policy of such associations, to strike with their best ability at the outset, that the principles of disunion may not have time to act, nor hostile intrigue to exert its influence on dishonesty, or jealousy, or terror. The above remark may be held more applicable to another great Confederacy than to that in the South of Europe; where the absolute control of England over Portugal, and her just ascendancy over the Spanish Government, have infused into the league a degree of consolidation scarcely to be found, where interest is less blended, and power more equally balanced.

But causes extrinsic to the scene of hostility in the Peninsula pressed home upon this country the obligation of vigour and dispatch. America and the North of Europe threatened her with a double claim upon her arms,—in the one to defend her rights; in the other, to restore them. Whatever may have been the temper of the American people, the leading members of their Government have been the humble creatures of Buonaparte. I do not assert, but I believe them to be his pensioned slaves. No insolence, no demonstration, escaped from Mr. Madison, until he saw our troops engaged in the protection of Spanish liberty. To provoke England to war while so embarrassed, could operate no otherwise than as a diversion in favour of France. The whole race, accordingly, of Mr. Madison's negotiations was of French parentage, and of the lowest order. The same sneering equivocation—the same impudent assumption of new or exploded principles—the same fraudulent

suppression of facts—the same cant and sing-song of honesty and virtue, to cover all that was base and sordid in design. The resolution, I repeat it, of this democratic hypocrite, could serve, and did serve, no other purpose than to forward the schemes of his employer, by throwing a further distraction in the way of the British arms. But it would demand some expenditure of time and cunning to bend the nation to his policy. England, therefore, by a rapid prosecution of warlike measures, might have used the interval to accomplish her ends in Europe. Nor were the friends of her Administration blind to the mischiefs unavoidably resulting from an American war. Long before it was declared, they renounced “the possibility of defending Spain against the French armies, with a force so inferior as that which Lord Wellington commanded!” Was it not, therefore, a solecism in reasoning to prolong that inferiority until the evil should be aggravated, by endangering Canada in addition to Spain, and by diverting the current of our (confessedly inadequate) strength from that great object, to the conservation of a distant colony?

If the darkness which gathered over our prospects in the West ought to have prepared Great Britain for a timely extrication of her arms from the Peninsula, the dawn of liberty which began to break from Russia upon this hemisphere promised a splendid recompence for their future employment.

By an early termination of the Spanish war, we should have averted the war with America; and

what is of unspeakably more importance, we might have decided the contest in the North.

But the country, it was said, so far from bearing more weighty burthens, must sink under those which were already imposed upon her. It is notorious, that a Prime Minister, whose disastrous fate became the subject of universal lamentation, had expressed his firm and deliberate sentiment, in favour of retrenching—not, indeed, those home expenses, which are termed the sources of corruption, but—those expenses attendant on our foreign military measures, which are strictly and properly the means of our defence. Now the unfitness of the Empire to sustain the *continued* pressure of those taxes and exertions which she has already borne, was a circumstance which would strike most forcibly the mind of a Statesman whose place obliged him to encounter all the difficulties of a labouring system of Finance. I freely subscribe to the plain proposition, that England could not be expected in 1810—and much less can she be now expected—to endure the continuance, for a long series of campaigns, of the present rate of her contributions. We are all aware that it cannot last. The simple question was and is, how to render it useful. Quick in his perception of single objects—prone to the search of subtle differences—nature and practice had prepared Mr. Perceval to analyze rather than to combine. Set before him a great and master principle, his genius as a reasoner carried him to pare away its extent—as a Minister, to mutilate its action. A man so engrossed by ordi-

nary hazards was little qualified for the attainment of superior ends. Plausible as it appeared, the argument put forth, and circulated by the disciples of Mr. Perceval, was neither deep, nor sound, nor prudent. Had the despair of our capacity for a vigorous prosecution of the contest been accompanied by a proposal for immediate peace, or by a disposition to accept proposals, there might have been error, but there would have been consistency between them. Here there was none. Peace and war were equally perverted by this system, which entailed upon us the ills of both, without the benefits of either. By leaving Spain to the mercy of Napoleon, we should have brought him to our own doors. We should have provoked the attack, which we dared not prevent: and had this mournful theory been adopted, its inevitable consequences would have needed no other illustration than the easy surrender of the whole Peninsula, and ultimately of Ireland, to Buonaparte.

The mode of hostility recommended in opposition to that, which had been, I doubt not, conscientiously approved, as it was fondly cherished by the friends of the Right Hon. Gentleman, was, strange to say, founded on the same principle; namely, that England cannot bear the undefined prolongation of her actual burthens. The conclusion, indeed, from these admitted premises, as drawn by the enemies of the neutral or economical proposition, was of a nature directly opposite. To them, and to *Vetus* amongst the number, it did seem evident, that the

surest way to mitigate the mass of evil, and to lighten the eventual sufferings of which war must be productive, was *to abridge its period* by an increase of our present expenditure, so far as might be necessary towards enlarging the scale of operations, and applying to each a decisive force. This is my view of the only essential disagreement between two classes of Statesmen who receive it as a common creed, that peace, with the unbroken power of Buonaparte, would be more calamitous than any condition, to be meditated amongst the average evils of war. Had either of these systems been *fully* acted on, from the summer of 1810 to the present year;—in one case, after gloriously emancipating our Allies, we might have achieved new triumphs, nay, imperishable conquests, more intrinsically precious to this maritime people, than the absolute dominion of the Elbe,—in the other, after weakly abandoning the Peninsula, we should have reduced our own islands to the daily terror of invasion.

The line which has been recently pursued by Ministers bespeaks, I trust, the commencement of a course of eminent and auspicious public service. In few, or very trifling instances, can they, since the close of the last campaign, be charged with misconduct, miscalculation, or neglect. To have headed the torrent of these wondrous times, would deserve a panegyric almost too high for mortals. It is no mean praise to the British Government, that they have watched and diligently followed the stream. That they once imagined obstacles in the way of

their country's fortune, which to other eyes were wholly invisible, or to other judgments of little weight, was, at the worst of times, the sum of my involuntary censure. That they have faced and surmounted many real difficulties, and procured for the empire great successes, are truths too conspicuous for envy to suppress, and too honourable to the nation for any upright Englishman to depreciate.

Whatever were the circumstances under which the battle of Salamanca was fought, or the mortifications by which it was soon succeeded, it proved a new era in this singular contest, and in the history of Great Britain after the lapse of an hundred years. It was not a victory gained within sight of the coast—under the guns of her fleet—or amidst the cheers of her seamen. It represented England in the striking light of a great and unalloyed military Power. The British General engaged the main army of Buonaparte in the very centre of Spain,—cut off more than 20,000 soldiers,—delivered four provinces at a single blow,—and shook the land to its extremity. Had the Administration on whom that illustrious Captain depended for the maintenance and improvement of a force which he so worthily employed thenceforth relaxed in the discharge of their growing duties, the south of Spain might ere long have been re-occupied by the Invader, and the day of Salamanca been a melancholy boast. But here begins the genuine triumph of our Government. Their energy, liberality, and unwearied exertion have kept pace with the prospects

unfolded by Lord Wellington, and in the silence of winter prepared for him that powerful and effective host, which seeming to forget the existence of an obstacle, in the Tormes, or the Douro,—in Burgos, or the Ebro,—fastened at once on the Pyrennees, as the lion on his prey. To the trophies of Vittoria, (if not to those of Salamanca,) Ministers contributed an abundant share. This extraordinary battle, unique in its species, and immeasurable in its consequences, bore in one respect an immediate resemblance to the victory of the Tormes. It cleared the North and East of Spain from the oppressions of Joseph and of Suchet,—as the unlooked for exploit of the year preceding had rescued the Southern provinces from Soult. The ground acquired by each of these victories was equal to the utmost space ever gained by Buonaparte, as the *military* result of his greatest battles. Marengo, and Jena, and Friedland, and Wagram, were crowned, it is true, by kingdoms and by treaties. But this branch of the art of improving success belongs more to diplomacy than to arms. It was not enough to sweep the French armies from the surface of the Peninsula. The garrisons were so many roots, by which they still held possession of the soil. By the battles of the Pyrennees* they were virtually eradicated. For

* The battle of Vittoria is the only general action in which, as well as in its preliminary movements, the English Chief has, strictly speaking, taken *the offensive*. With equal forces, skilfully conducted, it is the part which seldom fails to succeed. Jourdan's disposition appears to have been unpardonable; he overlooked the

intricacy of combination—promptitude and perspicuity of genius—unequal force, and desperate valour—we may likewise add, for the magnitude of the stake at issue,—these engagements rank high amongst the actions of modern times. The first

natural defences of his left wing, and suffered his right, the key of his direct communication with France, to be turned and destroyed. Qu. Was his position too extensive? Would not the ground admit of a forward movement of his right wing against the British, instead of waiting the attack of Sir Thomas Graham? Was not the resistance on the enemy's left too long protracted, after Sir Rowland Hill had taken possession of the eminence which commanded it, and by that means the retreat of the whole endangered, by withholding aid from the troops upon whom Sir T. G. had advanced?

There is a fine similitude between the battle of Salamanca and that of the 30th, in front of Pampluna, so far as respects their principle; and there is an interesting contrast in their details. They both display the wondrous rapidity of conception which belongs to the British General. In the former instance the enemy moved boldly forward to turn his right wing: in the battle of Pampluna, his left. In both cases he selected for the moment of attack, that wherein the French General was occupied with his own offensive manœuvre, and instead of waiting the assault (though mainly on the defensive) Lord Wellington became the assailant. But in the battle of Salamanca, he not only anticipated the attack, he directed it against that corps of the enemy's army which formed the attacking body. On the more recent occasion, he burst upon that portion of the enemy which was refused. The success was equal and decisive. But the French loss at Salamanca was more considerable. And generally it carries with it more extensive ruin to disconcert and defeat a body, which has thrown itself into an offensive movement, than to force the position of an army not so committed, though with an eye to the morale of the soldier it is probably not so sure.

assault of San Sebastian was cotemporary with the efforts to relieve it; a misfortune naturally deplored, but by some inconsiderately and unjustly censured. The breach was reported practicable—the ammunition had been almost expended—a numerous army under Soult was every day threatening to raise the siege;—to storm the fortress was the only immediate remedy for the first evil—and the only sure expedient for averting the second. When, therefore, a fair probability existed of carrying the place, with a loss far inferior to that of a general and doubtful battle, had Lord Wellington failed to risk such a contingency, he would have disregarded the plainest rules of military science. The second attack upon this dreadful fortress was no less glorious than the battles through which we had maintained the siege. But it was not barren glory. The capitulation consequent on the capture of the town has given to the Allies, for offensive purposes, a reinforcement of at least 10,000 men*. Should we act on the

* The besieging force before San Sebastian consisted of two British divisions, with two or three brigades of Portuguese and Spaniards, probably about 14,000 men. Leaving 4,000 in the captured fortress, the remainder of course become disposable. But should Lord Wellington think fit to retire to any distance within the frontier, 10 or 12,000 French troops, at least, must be drafted from their field force to undertake the recovery of the place; making a difference between the late and future circumstances of the two armies, *provided we should resume the defensive*, of certainly 20 or 22,000 men. After all, whilst we are masters of the sea, is it likely that France can ever get possession of St. Sebastian, with any given superiority in the field?

defensive within the Spanish frontier, it may be valued at more than 20,000 in the field. The fall of Pampluna, I hope inevitable, will yield as many more. The surrender of St. Sebastian was ensured by an event, the most interesting in the annals of this war of liberty, and perhaps the most decisive of its future fortune. *The Spanish army, alone, defeated the French.* Such a fact it is easy to understand, and to estimate. It is worth five British victories. For, if we take the Spanish corps which achieved it—and why are we not authorised so to assume?—as a specimen of the military excellence attainable by the mass of their armed countrymen, there is unquestionably a capacity in a population of twelve millions of Spaniards, to bring forward on their own soil, forces five times as numerous as England could transport to fight their battles. The position of the Pyrennees has other advantages, conjoined with the occupation of Biscay and Navarre. It shortens incalculably the line of operation from England—provides a safe and noble shelter for our shipping—and as the entire of the western coast of France lies in the direct route by which we support and reinforce our armies, the simple passage of a convoy, proceeding on its course, will harass the maritime provinces of France with apprehension, or enable us to strike at one or more of her harbours, a signal and unsuspected blow.

The progress of the Spaniards in military virtue has greatly altered the rationale of this subject, inasmuch as it has contributed to the cause a prodigious

increase of effective force, upon which I acknowledge, until the victory of General Freyre, it appeared to me perfectly unsafe to reckon. No country in Europe can boast a peasantry equal to that of Spain; and none, of course, can be said to possess more completely the foundation and materials of military power. It is a painful reflection, that notwithstanding these advantages, the wretched composition of the Spanish armies, from the first moment at which they were called upon to co-operate with ours, has not only disappointed every hope of active assistance, but has often disconcerted and utterly frustrated the skill and valour which their allies had evinced on their behalf. This deplorable misfortune might be traced to a single source—the weak and vicious character of the Government; an evil which, in its full extent, and in all its dreadful consequences, immediate and remote, upon the operations of the field—the interests of the alliance—and the future safety of the Spanish Crown, was observed with unerring sagacity by our Ambassador to the Junta of Seville, and expounded and dwelt upon with characteristic force and eloquence:—“ In this unreserved advice, (says Lord Wellesley to the Supreme Junta, Sept. 8, 1809 *), the Government of Spain will perceive the most unquestionable proof of His Majesty’s sincere anxiety for the independence and stability of the Spanish Monarchy, and for the prosperity and honour of Spain; since it is evident, that the independence of

* See Papers presented to Parliament: printed March 10, 1810.

“ a nation must rest on the basis of her own internal
 “ force and public spirit; and that no country can
 “ attain happiness or glory, by an implicit reliance
 “ on foreign aid.”

“ For these great objects, I should view with the
 “ most lively satisfaction any regular, deliberate,
 “ and systematic attention to the increase and ma-
 “ nagement of the military resources of Spain, and to
 “ the augmentation, composition, discipline, and ef-
 “ ficiency, of the Spanish armies.”

“ For the same purpose, it would also be highly ad-
 “ vantageous to revise the whole system of the mili-
 “ tary department; and especially to establish, by
 “ law, regulations for securing supplies, and means
 “ of transport, for the armies employed in the de-
 “ fence of Spain.”

“ But the source of every improvement must be the
 “ efficiency of the Executive Power,” &c.

This view of affairs in the Peninsula, the descrip-
 tion of which I have taken almost at random, from a
 rich repository * of enlightened counsel, just repre-
 sentation, and dignified remonstrance, was forced
 upon our Ambassador by the ungrateful treatment
 which Sir Arthur Wellesley's army, bleeding and pe-
 rishing for their sake, had experienced from the of-
 ficers and civil authorities of the Spaniards. These
 opinions are of bold and universal application. There
 has been no period of the Spanish contest upon which
 they do not distinctly bear; but surely the crisis has
 never yet arrived, at which both Governments have

* See the whole body of documents relating to the mission of
 Marquis Wellesley.

been so imperatively called upon as at this moment, to consider and abide by the everlasting truth—
 “ That the independence of a nation must rest on
 “ the basis of her own internal force and public
 “ spirit; and that *no country can preserve her hap-
 “ piness or glory, by an implicit reliance on foreign
 “ aid.*”

Had the armies of Spain manifested no improvement, since the age when Blake and Cuesta were employed to defeat every hope that brightened on the British arms, England must have supported, and supported alone, the burthen of a war in which the Spanish officers were substantially worse than neutral. In that case the French might still have been beaten; but Spain could never be secure. There were times when such was a current apprehension—and when it was difficult to resist the belief, that we must yield to the preposterous and cruel necessity, not only of delivering Spain without Spanish aid, but of wasting the services of our victorious troops on the indefinite protection of a foreign frontier. This happily is now at an end.

The aspect of hostilities on the eastern coast has varied with that of the principal operations; for every march in advance by Lord Wellington's army was a movement on the flank of Suchet. That officer has judged more accurately than the Ministers of the Empress Regent, how far the reverses of Jourdan and of Soult ought to influence him to abandon the post with which his master had entrusted him. We are told, that he has long since, by an order from Paris, been recalled within the territory of France. This

could only be from the view of his co-operating with Soult, in repelling the approaches of the allied army—and serves to demonstrate, in the clearest manner, the panic into which our victories had thrown the Cabinet of St. Cloud. Had Suchet not opposed this unreflecting mandate, the troops under Lord William Bentinck, inferior in numbers, and much more so in composition to his, would have advanced at leisure to besiege or mask the garrisons of Barcelona and Figueras. These garrisons would have been reduced to a subsistence on their magazines, and Suchet himself to live upon his own countrymen: while the brave Catalans, released by his absence from the burthen of supporting, and the fear of provoking him, would, by an instantaneous and universal movement, add another army to the allies.

The policy, however, which inclines Marshal Suchet to wait the course of events, will hardly enable him to counteract it. The fall of Pampluna may authorise Lord Wellington to offer him inducements towards a speedy retreat, more powerful than those of his Imperial Mistress. A direct march of some divisions to join Lord Wm. Bentinck would be apt to subdue his obstinacy. A rapid advance against Soult, and Bayonne, would indirectly produce the same effect. Nor need we now be alarmed by a *senatus consultum* for thirty thousand conscripts. A larger body of Spanish warriors have lately shewn their determination to render such decrees abortive, and have given *unhoped-for* confidence to the allied arms.

Upon the whole, I regard the good cause as at this hour triumphant. If the energy of the last few months,

may the last few weeks, be evinced by this country but a little longer;—if proper means be taken, and I trust they will be taken, to draw from the overflowings of our domestic force, a supply to the necessary demands of that which has been so usefully and gloriously engaged in vindicating the rights and happiness of mankind;—if the acknowledged prowess of our Spanish brethren in the field can be justly construed as a proof of equal advances by their Government, in zeal and harmony, in spirit and foresight;—then may we indulge the expectation, that the Peninsula which we have delivered, we need not also be called upon to preserve; but that a people just restored to the powers of manhood will not soon degenerate into age and imbecility. Perhaps we are not too sanguine in the prayer, that this campaign, far as it has already run, may terminate our toils—and crown us with their fairest fruits, by grafting on the laurel of victory the peaceful olive. Without one glance at any scene but that on which we ourselves have acted,—without reliance on a single friend, or allusion to a single hope, but those of which it is scarcely in the malice of fortune to deprive us—what blessings have not rained upon Europe within six short months? England, Spain, and Russia, free—who will despair of the final independence of nations?

VETUS.

LETTER XXX.

State and Prospects of the War in Germany.

SIR,

OCT. 9, 1813.

THE tenour of my sentiments on the Spanish war has undergone no change since the occurrences of the campaign in Catalonia. The enterprises of Suchet can have but little influence on the general operations of the Allied Army, since the position of Lord Wellington is of itself an effectual bar to the progress of that officer towards the South. I conclude, therefore, for the present, my observations on this contest. Those anxieties by which it has so long disturbed us, give way to a moral certainty of its successful issue—and were there no second source of uneasiness, would admit this nation to the full enjoyment of sweet and merited repose.

The transition to Germany is the more natural and urgent, because of the close and intimate connexion of her interests with those of the Peninsula. Should Buonaparte prosper on the Elbe—and by force or machination overturn the hopes of the Confederates—I am not one of those who behold in such a misfortune the *necessary* ruin of Spain: but I am afraid we must in that case prepare ourselves for a severe disappointment of many sanguine hopes; for the incalculable prolongation of a struggle otherwise so

nearly ended; and for the immediate repetition of a series of toils and perils, fierce, doubtful, and consuming. Were we not sensible, therefore, of any stake in the North of Europe, superadded to its involution with the cause of Spanish liberty, that alone might engage the warmest feelings of Englishmen. But the subject bears upon us with a distinct and even superior pressure. The conquest of the Peninsula by Napoleon might give him, directly, nothing more than a military post. A peace of his dictation to the coalesced Powers would leave Great Britain without a friend,—(for Spain is but her client)—and would banish the name of neighbour and of neutral from the face of the civilized world.

Were it prudent or reasonable to form an opinion of the destiny in store for this great Coalition, from calculating only its abundant materials, and its vast elementary powers, we should speedily arrive at conclusions the most gratifying to a virtuous and manly mind. The enemy of peace, and freedom, and justice, is now overmatched in every possession which may be said to constitute physical resource. But if in numbers—in devotion, also,—in the sense of an overruling and extreme necessity,—in contempt for suffering, and in confidence of success, the Allied Armies are represented, by every statement *, from every quarter, as more than equal to the unfledged conscripts of Buonaparte, I will carry the admission

* The clear, intelligent, and spirited narratives of Sir Charles Stewart, are specimens of what military dispatches ought to be. They would do the gallant officer sufficient credit, were he not already distinguished by a course of active and honourable services.

one step farther. It seems to me, from a critical observation of the opening and progress of this campaign, that if we consider the several battles—including those wherein Napoleon himself commanded—and taking his genius at its utmost price—there has displayed itself on the side of the Confederate Monarchs a greater portion of military science and intellect, than any which they have yet encountered. It is not, therefore, in the field that we are likely to fail. It is easier to direct an hundred thousand soldiers, than half a dozen well-bred Ministers: and we might impress upon all the armies of Europe an uniform and effective law of action, in less time than we could inspire the least harmony of feeling into any two of its Courts. The known vice of all extensive coalitions tends to favour the currency of inauspicious rumour. Within these few days we have heard enough, not indeed essentially to bias our judgment, but to claim our earnest attention. The movements of Buonaparte are extraordinary and unsafe*. On principles, and reasonings purely military, he appears at this distance to have sacrificed every sound calculation, to a ferocious indulgence of his pride, or to a desperate reliance on his fortune. At the commencement of hostilities in the present campaign, Dresden, as a central point, was chosen with incomparable skill. It would become a support to his march into Silesia, for the relief of his fortresses on the Oder. It was that centre which enabled him, with the shortest radius, to sweep at once

* This, in few words, has turned out to be the precise truth.

the Austrian and Prussian Monarchies,—and, while he maintained, on both sides, the Saxon frontier, to throw the burthen of subsisting the Allied forces on the people of their respective States. These views were just ; but his strength, from the outset, has proved unequal to his purposes. The present army of Napoleon, terrific in number and in name, is more apparently than substantially formidable. It was not in their ranks that his battalions were most ruined by the Russian war,—the great body of *regimental officers* was annihilated. Whatever, therefore, may be the numerical amount of French conscripts, and whatever the quickness of their capacity to learn, the loss of instructors has turned out to be quite irreparable—and all that was most excellent in the composition of the French Armies has perished with its immediate source. The execution, indeed, of every enterprise since the rupture of the late Armistice has been attended with a species of distrust and languor, fully sufficient to render it abortive. If any hope of supporting a parallel with the character and exploits of the great Frederick entered into the motives of this Revolutionary Conqueror, for making Dresden the pivot of his campaign, it has been the occasion of a cruel disappointment, and of a luckless choice. He has even less resembled the celebrated Monarch by his recent actions, than his half-concocted levies have shown themselves fit to rival the prowess displayed, and now I trust resumed, by the once invincible troops of Prussia. He has been excused by his admirers for the incompetency

of his means, on the ground of having prepared against Prussia and Russia alone. This apology—a bitter sarcasm—which supposes him to have misapprehended the designs of Austria, is wholly unsustained by evidence. The early and abrupt departure of Beauharnois to Milan sets that suspicion at rest. The true defect in all his combinations may be traced to his nature and his history—to constitutional presumption, fostered by extravagant prosperity—and to an experience of the weak and shallow minds, over which his influence had reached, in some degree, the rigour and hardihood of prescription. He forgot that it was the province of adversity to enlighten—and of boundless aggrandisement to deceive; and that he and his opponents might be severally recorded as illustrations of either truth. Had Napoleon looked with temper at the scene before him, he would have discovered great difficulties in his progress to the Oder. With a well-commanded and unbroken army, appuyed on the Silesian fortresses in his front,—with the Austrians, occupying Bohemia in rear of his right wing,—and not only the troops, but the armed population of Prussia impelled by Bernadotte, upon his left,—*was it possible* to speculate on his advancing through Silesia with impunity? The dying hand of a noble soldier, magnanimous in exile, and triumphant after death, levelled at his antagonist the mortal blow which changed in an hour the whole aspect of military operations.

The transfer of the allied arms, from the front of

Buonaparte, to the seat of his depots, and to his principal line of communication, was a stroke for which it is clear that our Corsican tactics had been from the origin unprepared. His plan was framed upon offensive principles. But, instead of his diverging from a common centre, against Berlin, Prague, and Breslau, the protectors of these three royal cities, from every point of a wide circumference, converge more closely upon him. What then follows? By a union of rare felicity and talent, he may take advantage of some prodigious error; win a great battle, and oblique to Berlin or to Prague,—that is to say, he may by possibility gain ground to either flank;—but can he by such a victory make twenty forced marches in advance? Can he reach the Vistula, and rescue Dantzic?—No; nor establish himself on the Oder!—nor, until the main force both of Austria and of Prussia be shattered to pieces, can he subdue Silesia,—or venture to stray to a considerable distance beyond the chain of posts upon the Elbe. In other words, he must despair, by the simple application of *military* power, to break the substance of the Prussian monarchy,—or to compel the Continent to such a peace, as shall not leave her physically and morally more formidable than at any period subsequent to the battle of Marengo.

Well, then,—pressed in front, and on either flank—and menaced, if not sorely straitened, in his rear,—with troops dispirited, and desertion spreading,—does the French Emperor retire? No: although

the ring of the hunters becomes narrower and more complete,—although their quality improves, and their number increases,—although the approach of winter must reduce his supplies, and impede and abridge his movements,—the tyger still creeps about his den.

I cannot persuade myself that Buonaparte is governed by military arguments, in this mysterious pertinacity*. *It is impossible* that, without a general action, and a signal defeat of the Allies, he can maintain this advanced and insecure position. But the battle *may be fought in the Cabinet*:—he may appeal from bravery, to treachery or folly,—from the people, who beat him, and whom he cannot purchase,—to the Court, who sell their love and hatred,

* This assertion, of the incapacity of Buonaparte to retain possession of Dresden, was made at a time when it had become a favourite belief that the French would winter in Saxony.—It was not many days afterwards when fresh dispatches arrived from Sir Charles Stewart, stating the perilous situation and probable retreat of Buonaparte—and confirming almost literally the sentiments of Vetus, on the actual character of the French army. No man, since the days of Alexander of Macedon, has pushed the advantages of victory so far as Buonaparte—none seems to have profited so little by defeat. Both may be ascribed to a blind confidence in his fortune; which, operating on *the fears* of foreign nations, confirmed their overthrow—but met by their enthusiasm or steady resolution, served only to aggravate the recoil of calamity upon himself. Had he consented to sacrifice the Elbe—the Hanse towns—and Illyria—before Austria took any part in the contest—who can say whether Italy might not have been left untouched in his hands—Spanish freedom basely compromised—and Holland still an “alluvion” of the French rivers?

—to whom the spirit of freedom and of manly vengeance, of faith and consistency, of patriotism and honour, of fortitude and enthusiasm, are alike unknown.

What would, therefore, be wild insanity in a soldier, might in Buonaparte, with a view to intrigue, be the perfection of political cunning. In this sense Dresden may suit him well. Though he could not intimidate Alexander from the Kremlin of Moscow, the ostentatious maintenance of the Saxon capital will enable him to palter with the nurses and grand-sires of Vienna ; since, to those who cannot, or will not, scrutinize the precarious tenure by which he holds the Electorate, its protracted occupancy may be a pretext for granting him conditions, now actually unattainable by the French arms,—but hereafter irreversible by the arms of all Europe combined. Each hour that he keeps it may teem with dreadful importance.

On these considerations I am not ashamed to confess, that wonder, at the seeming rashness of the Corsican, yields in my mind to jealousy and suspicion of its object. On these grounds it is, that one hears, with uneasiness, the circulated stories of the day, that coldness and dissatisfaction subsist between some Members of the alliance,—that negotiations for an armistice have taken place,—or that the threatened acceptance of certain shameful proposals by Austria has been made the alternative, if the British Ministers should refuse her enormous and unreasonable demands of subsidy. We must speak

out. This is no season for subsidy. We have had too much of paying those who arm for their own preservation,—and whose requisitions of English money are coeval with their assent to projects of a Continental peace, in which every interest dear and necessary to Great Britain is scrupulously disclaimed and abandoned,—her fundamental rights,—her just pretensions—her labours and sacrifices—her sufferings, services, and welfare,—basely, ungratefully, stupidly, forgotten or disowned. We must support our Ministers in every bold and strenuous exertion against the enemy. Nay, more: it is the bounden duty of Parliament, and of the country, to interpose between our Government and its insincere or selfish Allies,—and by a strong declaration of the public will, to shield the Executive of this limited monarchy from the unpopular task of rejecting insatiable, though plausible solicitation, and of repelling systematic and universal encroachment on our already burthened finance.

Our present relations with the Continent of Europe open to us a wide and fruitful subject of enquiry. The engagements which we may have contracted with the various Powers will shortly meet the eye of Parliament. They must afford a fair topic of comparison between the views entertained by the parties to this alliance, and the principles by which they ought to be animated and held together. The correspondence of their acts with their avowed intentions, qualified nevertheless by a regard to their opportunities, will derive ample elucidation from the

knowledge thus obtained,—and throw light in its turn on the value of that good faith and fellowship, on which we are instructed to raise so much of our confidence in the war.

I do not believe the ominous croakings of the Continent. Far less am I disposed to credit the existence of subsidiary treaties to a vast amount, concurred in by the British Government. The limits so lately assigned by Ministers to their scale of exertion in the Peninsula,—and the acknowledged magnitude of their pecuniary embarrassments, measured last year by that of their financial innovations,—justify us in treating such reports as emanating from a spirit of aspersion upon their consistency, and as libellous insinuations against their zeal in the Spanish cause *.

Of the subsidiary system, to the evils of which I have reason to believe that Ministers are by no means insensible, we shall speak at large hereafter. It is a distinguished member of that great series of subjects,

* It is not the business of the author to settle this paradox—that 1,000,000*l.* was an unattainable benefit, when recommended for Spain in 1812—and that ten times that amount should be showered away among Russians, Swedes, and Prussians, only nine months afterwards—add to which, we might have had the entire disposal of our own money, if granted for the service of the Peninsula—a privilege hardly to be claimed without the excitement of much jealousy and ill temper in the case of the Northern powers. Now, without censuring (far from it) the *spirit* from which so many liberal donations have flowed out upon members of the grand alliance, one may surely admire at the coexistence of a spirit diametrically adverse to this, in the minds of a large proportion of the same cabinet.

which embraces and connects the multifarious assemblage of interests, rights, and duties, local or general, fugitive or lasting, that compose the sum of our relation to foreign States. Should a day of glory and happiness await mankind—it is now while I address you that each reasoning faculty, each active energy, ought to be in motion, to secure and hasten its approach. By seasonable discussion we may help to dissipate any clouds which have gathered on so bright a morning. But the time for deliberation runs rapidly away. The good we forbear to grasp at, vanishes. Misery soon ceases to *impend*—Disaster becomes incurable—Reflection intolerable—Counsel useless—and terror sinks into despair.

VETUS.

Of the subsidiary system, to the evils of which I have reason to believe that Ministers are by no means insensible, we will speak at large hereafter. It is a distinguished member of that great series of subjects—

• It is not the history of the author to write this paradox—that 1,000,000 was no bearable burden, when recommended for Spain in 1812—and for two times that amount should be shown every young Russian, Swede and Prussian, only nine months of age, and to which, we might have had the entire amount of 1,000,000 granted for the service of the Peninsula—proposed to be claimed without the excitement of such a war, and to temper in the case of the northern powers, without causing (as it did) the great rain which so many liberal donors have given to our country of the grand alliance, and may easily admit at the expiration of a spirit dis-

LETTER XXXI.

Sketch of the War of the Revolution.

Sir,

Oct. 24, 1813.

WERE much of our happiness amenable to measures of State, to live would be a curse; and life, not death—the proper test of courage. We may reform the worst individual; we may instruct the weakest: but that *a people*, however famed for virtue or intelligence, should act in general, towards others, on principles of justice, or in their own affairs adopt the lessons of experience, who is so ignorant or so credulous as to believe? The laws which determine political obligation, flow less obviously from their venerable source, than those which ascertain the rectitude of private action. Hence their authority, by the mass of mankind, is held to be less absolute and complete; and has exercised, in comparison, a feebler influence. But what is unfortunately a greater practical mischief, the reward and punishment which constitute the sanctions of these laws are neither so direct nor so forcible as those which restrain the members of society. The crime or folly of the individual agent is punished in his own person: whereas an offending Government shifts the day of reckoning to its people,—the infatuated people to a future age,

—heedless that it is themselves who suffer in their children, since the hand of death touches not the identity of nations.

Of such wickedness, France is the most conspicuous living proof;—of such weakness, we find an afflicting monument in the other States of Europe.

The several periods of the French revolution have produced a corresponding succession of errors amongst the Statesmen of the time. A series of grand mistakes has led to fatal consequences; and has proved the propensity of the human temper to console itself under the bitterness of disappointed hope, by false reasonings which hurry it into farther disappointment. Let us trace a few of these: they bear upon our present purposes. In the earlier stages of this desolating revolution, before the powers of enthusiasm had grappled with the obstinacy of prescription, the nature and magnitude of French resource had been so incredibly underrated, that a solemn and almost universal alliance was formed amongst the Potentates of the European world, for the conquest and partition of France. Of this first project, strangled in its very infancy, England was not an ostensible partaker. She reserved her interference for a moment which supplied her with topics more persuasive. The defeat of the proposition for dismembering France was succeeded by a scheme, on the part of the victorious revolutionists, for decomposing and dissolving every foreign Government. This was the crisis seized by Mr. Pitt. "What," (exclaimed his eloquent rival) "will you combat opi-

nion by force?"—"Yes," (it was replied, and with truth unanswerable) "opinions propagated by *the sword, must be resisted by the sword.*" Such was the avowed principle of the war of 1793,—a mighty principle, which involved the most precious rights of men, and entailed upon its advocates the most sacred and most evident of duties. To restore the Bourbons could not be the end or primary motive to such a war. It could have been only one (then possibly the most judicious) amongst a variety of modes by which legitimate Sovereigns might uphold the maxim, that a Government guilty of declaring "war to palaces, and peace to cottages"—that is, destruction to the natural order of society,—and of enforcing by arms in neighbouring countries, the "holy right of insurrection"—was not a Government to be acknowledged or endured by any people, who wished to preserve the unimpaired blessing of their laws, institutions, and internal concord.

This theoretic war of national independence, against atrocious violence, lost its character from the day of its birth. The first grand error of Mr. Pitt's Ministry was a departure from the principles on which their policy had been founded. Unity of object once abandoned, there could be no longer a cordial or prosperous coalition. This was their most calamitous political mistake. But it was the fruitful parent of an endless progeny of blunders, military, political, and mixed. England nibbled at the remote extremities of the Jacobin Empire—assailed it where no resistance was offered, and no good was to be

achieved—assailed it every where but in Europe, where alone the enemy was accessible—the danger pressing—and where victory might have been glorious and complete. The Confederate Courts, which shared the money of England, shared her follies also. One and all they encountered preternatural peril with vulgar precaution. France herself was debauched by the cheap and many-coloured multitude of her triumphs; until the moving power which she had borrowed from the love of liberty sunk into an engine of barbarous tyranny, and menaced all Christendom with chains.

The speculations of the British Government were pitiful—its intentions frightful—its *political* enterprises, (the result of both) strikingly, and, in some cases, deservedly unsuccessful.

Despairing to conquer France, we undertook to *starve her*,—to famish an entire nation,—age, infancy, women—all! How ended this inhuman wickedness? Some perished. The bulk of the people reduced their desires, and thus compounded with necessity. Prudence, patience, and fortitude—children of want—were called forth to mitigate its pressure. Desperation drove myriads from the bosom of France to the army, to glut their hunger on the foreign foe. Their sword reaped the harvests of Germany; and England, by the aggravated sufferings of which she was the author, increased, in the minds of the French nation, the faculty of endurance, the appetite for plunder, and the ferocious hatred which possessed them against her name and being. The natural effect

of her scheme was to make France more terrible, and the hour of peace more remote.

A second dream of that rhetorical and artificial, but half-reasoning Cabinet, went to visit France with a more indirect destruction,—with beggary in failure of famine. When the most accomplished Orator of the age opened his exhortations to the monied interest, to come liberally forward and extinguish Jacobinism, by one tremendous loan,—since she long had stood upon the brink of bankruptcy, and the gulph already yawned to receive her—what an humbling comment on the penetration of that celebrated Minister was afforded, within a twelvemonth of the period at which he spoke *! He forgot that a people, lately broken loose from the restraints and ligaments of the funding system, were proof against a return of its factitious terrors. Threaten them with ruin!

* The most pressing danger that now menaces Buonaparte is not supposed at this moment to arise from hostility to the conscription, or to his own person—but from the extreme want of money, and from the avowed necessity of resorting to direct taxation. His indigence, it is true, may wholly incapacitate him from supporting a campaign beyond the French frontier—for there is no longer a spirit of national enthusiasm to urge his armies forward—nor of fraternization in foreign countries to receive and subsist them; but very little money will serve his purpose within the territory of France herself—where the excesses of the Russian and Prussian light troops must be worth more to Napoleon than a hundred of his Imperial proclamations.—On the other hand, a conspiracy against his life, at Paris, and its consequences, if successful, would bring all our hypotheses to rather an abrupt conclusion. We are, in London, much at a loss for facts.

Why, the Republic was nursed in ruin. What had the Jacobins to fear? The death of credit was the capital which set up the Revolution. A Revolution of monstrous race was not to be fed by common aliment. From the very womb it was plunged into this petrifying "gulph of bankruptcy,"—and became, as by an immersion in the waves of Styx, callous and invulnerable to ordinary weapons. Well might the demagogue of "the Mountain" reply to Mr. Pitt—

"*Credit* is in her grave *;

"After Life's fitful fever, she sleeps well.

"Treason has done his worst: forced loans, *forged assignats* †,

"Malice domestic—foreign levy—nothing

"Can touch her further."

In such a country, at such a crisis, force was finance. Robbery was her sole revenue. Unless the armies were bankrupt in ardour, skill, and courage, it was miserable trifling to talk of bankruptcy to a Republic, whose bonds hardly paid the wages of the engraver, —but whose victorious legions fattened on the rich products of Flanders, and carried her frontier to the Rhine. It appears, then, that a country of vast extent, containing within her own bosom food, and clothes, and arms for her inhabitants—with a resolute

* *Macbeth*.—"Duncan is in his grave," &c.

† The forgery and circulation of French assignats, was rumoured to be amongst the strong war-measures of the British Government.

Government, and an excited people—can neither be subdued by poverty nor hunger. Mr. Pitt had America before his eyes, with paper as much depreciated as that of France; but the means of her Congress for repairing her deficiencies bore no comparison to those of this Giant European Republic;—no Church lands—no Crown property—no saleable confiscations during the war—no reimbursement from conquered States. We, indeed, have more evidence than the Minister of that day could summon. He only tried the French experiment,—we have seen the result;—but we have yet higher, clearer, and more decisive testimony. Russia, the most thinly populated, and all things considered, the poorest country in Europe,—without a ruble in her coffers, nor the means of borrowing a ruble,—what a battle has she fought! What glory and greatness has she acquired,—what an enemy has she crushed,—what a benefactress may she not have proved to mankind! Why do I urge all this? Not to asperse the memory, or to criminate the life, of as bold and upright (though with submission I speak it, certainly not quite as successful) a Minister as ever ruled these realms:—No—I apostrophize his errors, to deprecate their recurrence in another shape. If his theory be no longer tenable,—if his confidence in the destruction of France, from her being destitute of a flourishing system of revenue, led this country into the most fallacious hopes, and inflicted on the nation the most mortifying disappointments,—if America, and France, and Russia have all practically main-

tained the consoling truth, that a determined people can fight and defend themselves without money,—let us beware of again sliding into an evil too closely connected with that false and pernicious doctrine of Mr. Pitt; and too sadly exemplified in what may be termed the converse of that branch of his indiscretions,—let us not make the assumed necessities of our present Continental friends a plea for the more than mortal madness of supplying those necessities from the sweat, and blood, and vitals of England. But I will not anticipate that question.

What creed came next? After reluctantly admitting the fact, that while the population of France was half famished, and her finances wholly ruined, her troops still marched from victory to victory—we learned to raise new hopes on the *distractions of Paris*. It was impossible, the people of England wisely assured themselves—and they were more wisely encouraged in the delusion by their Government—it was impossible that a country so agitated, so convulsed in its interior—so torn to pieces and exhausted by conflicting parties—so weakened and paralysed in head and heart—should continue to prosper in its military operations, or spare attention, or communicate energy, to the forces acting at a distance. It is not enough to say that such sentiments exhibit a glaring disregard of History. They betray the want of a guide more versatile and unerring than any record—the want of present observation, and of a perspicacious intellect. It arose from the genius and character of the Revolution, that the

successes of the army should be consistent with distractions in the State. It was even to be inferred by fair reasoning, that the military power of France, under process of revolution, should be formidable, in *proportion* as her Executive Government was embarrassed. The Cabinet, occupied with contiguous dangers, would naturally clothe its Generals with a more enlarged prerogative. On this element of conquest we need not dwell,—nor on the superior efficacy of a reconnoissance followed up by the Republican Commanders on the spot, to that of an official report which those of Austria dared not act upon, until discussed and authenticated by the Aulic Council at Vienna. But the clashing or pulling of parties against each other sprung from the vigour universally generated. The popular feeling was strained. Where the machine of Government worked with a slow or interrupted motion, it was not from languor of spirit, or from weakness of construction. We ascribed to infirmity the effect of redundant force,—and to sinking lassitude the apparent sleep of tense and terrible spasm. The disorder relieved itself in streams of blood. Lost employment,—baffled ambition,—perhaps disgusted humanity—sent millions of volunteers from Paris and the provinces, to fill and inflame the ranks of an enthusiastic army. Fanatics in the overthrow of Christianity; philosophers in search of spoil; they displayed the joint accomplishments of Mahomet and Pizarro. A mind overloaded with energy was the essence of this pestilence. The remedy was an abuse of the disease. At home

it found vent in massacre—abroad in triumph. We come to a fourth division of our history. A thousand tyrants were displaced by one. That democracy, whose strength was in the excess of passion, gave way to a despotism whose existence required that universal apathy should succeed. Fermentation and opposition were no longer visible. Party was quelled—Patriotism crushed—the troops lost the revolutionary impulse; but retained and cultivated their military virtues, their bravery, discipline, and science. Numberless wars have since familiarized the qualifications of the French soldiery to all the States of Europe. The sweep of conquest was long unchecked. The outline of victory, it is true, was here and there indented by partial and detailed miscarriage—but this was a calamity most deeply noxious to the welfare of every European State, and actually *conducive*, strange though it may seem, to the extension and establishment of Buonaparte's empire. The series of false views and miscalculations so unfortunately countenanced by the momentary repulses to which the arrogance of that adventurer has exposed him, form a subject of regret more bitter and mortifying than any at which I have hitherto glanced—a subject of examination far more interesting, because it relates to opportunities not yet beyond our reach—and of remonstrance more useful, because its mischiefs may still in part be avoided.

VETUS.

LETTER XXXII.

Necessity of continued Military Exertion—State of France.

SIR,

OCT. 30, 1813*.

To animate the national feeling oppressed by despondency,—to correct the wild spirit of premature and treacherous exultation,—and to supersede each of these disorders in its prevalence, by manly intrepidity founded on judicious exertion,—this is the province of patriots and of Statesmen,—of public counsellors, and uncorrupted writers. We have recently been occupied in adverting to a train of misconceptions, which prolonged and multiplied the disasters whence they arose. It is a less mournful, and now a more seasonable office, to deprecate the indulgence of that class of delusion, so fertile of examples, and of victims, which has too frequently checked the most promising career,—dimmed the brightest anticipation,—and seized the mind at those eventful crises, when, instead of labouring to repair misfortune, the question was how to improve success, and to finish the work of victory.

Lest I should be misunderstood as to the intention of those strictures on our policy, with which my

* This letter was written before any account of the battles of Leipsic.

review of certain critical periods has been accompanied; or as to the motive of those farther reprehensions and remonstrances, which the actual tendency of the feelings now indicated by this country and her Continental neighbours may provoke; I will briefly state their uses.

The first grand end is the *absolute annihilation* of the foreign system erected by France, in all its properties, means, and noxious elements,—the utter excision of the cancer and its roots. Every measure which has been adopted, or which appears to be meditated, ought therefore to rank as wise or mischievous, with reference to that great and solitary end.

If I deplored the abdication of those lofty and luminous principles by which our first war against French anarchy was consecrated in the eyes of the world—it was because a steady adherence to such principles would have lighted us directly to the ruin of the Jacobin Empire. When I censured the futility of threatening with “the loss of credit” a revolutionary power which had sprung from *the destruction* of credit—it was because the argument appeared at variance with itself; and the hope a desperate chimera. When, again, a third contingency had been resorted to, and the fate of the French armies rashly prognosticated from the violence and eternal conflict of the factions at home—was not the reason of the thing, and the notorious precedent of ancient history, enough to convince us, that foreign conquest might be coeval with popular tumult? And

would it not have been a more sage and manly course, to confide implicitly in the administration of our own vigour and greatness, than to speculations on any intrinsic causes of decay affecting the finances or the forces of the enemy? It becomes an heroic people to take the fate of their adversaries into their own hands. What more visible characteristic of a mean and coward spirit, than to leave its most solemn cares and most arduous duties to fortune? fortune—who submits, but rarely condescends,—who gives most to those who solicit least,—and who never makes favourites of dependants. We have had—we now have—the immortal goal within our reach: but it is a goal to be attained through the agony of unremitting exertion. We must shrink from nothing. If faults have been committed, and are likely to be repeated by our rulers—let us shake them roughly, if we can no otherwise rouse them. If the probe, the caustic, or the knife, be inevitable, he who is the first to use them, will use them most effectually. It is of tenfold importance to dissuade this Government from a blind surrender of the wealth and confidence of England to every Ally—that is, to every accident—because it wears the mask of virtue—because to cultivate strenuously, however in some respects injudiciously, the spirit of fraternal union with surrounding nations, is at least an off-shoot from a noble stock—because the partial misapplication of British energy is better than no energy at all—because, *at this hour*, pregnant with mortal destiny, where we interfere with Ministers, it can only

be to exhort, or to deprecate, or to correct—or, if unsuccessful in these, to forgive them. It is not a moment to abandon the Executive Power, from a regard to modes, where principles are acknowledged*. It may be my belief, that the Treaty with Sweden contains some pernicious stipulations—that it is rich in grants, and barren of securities: yet is the groundwork good. Again—to give money, is to give into the hands of other nations, the exercise and guardianship of our own resource. Why not contribute *men*? To my judgment English soldiers are even more profitable than English subsidies are wasteful. Yet, at an era when supplies are difficult, and the finances in the jaws of death, we must applaud the zeal which can face a subsidy, though we may lament the improvidence that concedes it. But, however resolute the opposition to such engagements in their progress, it will be for our interest and honour to fulfil them when formed; since it is incomparably less mischievous to execute an unthrifty bargain, than at such a season to harass or disgrace the Government, to disjoint a solid coalition, and unhinge a glorious cause. He, therefore, whose courage would now enable him to desire the overthrow of an Administration so incorporated with the time, might wait with equanimity, or malignant joy, the course and final catastrophe of their errors. For us it will be more consistent to support

Vide Preface.

them for the sake of their principles, while we fairly pronounce upon each instance of practical abuse.

But to resume the suspended narrative of my former letter. From the fruitless reverie, so long indulged, that the warlike genius of the republican *troops* would be shaken by the political agitations of their Government, we fell into an opposite delirium. The next epidemic by which we were visited was, that the French *Government* would sink under the first reverse of its arms. The Imperial power of Napoleon had been established by victory;—what, then, more logical, than to infer its immediate demolition from defeat? This was a woful sophism:—the North of Europe suffered for it after the battle of Eylau;—Austria was destroyed by it after that of Asperne;—the whole Continent cherished it after the campaign with Russia;—England, a thousand times puffed up with this imagination, a thousand times disappointed, still clings to the wretched flattery as if she had no interest in truth. A people the most masculine now on earth—a nation of the best reasoners that ever existed—seem so inured to self-deception, that its repeated exposures produce in their minds neither shame, surprise, nor terror. When shall we trust our own courage as steadily as we have heretofore relied on chance? When spurn this low-minded empyricism, which imputes false qualities to the Giant nature with which we contend—which founds

on matchless ignorance of his constitution, and on a pitiful depreciation of his resources, an excuse for the negligence of those simple, but laborious means, which alone can accomplish his overthrow? Conspiracies, forsooth, at Paris! Whole provinces ripe for insurrection! What then? The conspirators are seized—the insurgents ripen—and rot. “Philip sick! go, go,—such counsels would soon raise up “another Philip.”

It is not to be asserted that under any imaginable circumstances, our hope of civil discord in France must be wholly void of foundation. A beaten despot is compelled to be more despotic. Tyranny and disaster sometimes propagate by collision. As the hour of weakness comes, the tyrant’s necessities press hard upon him. He exacts more—he fears more—and forgives less. Force degenerates into violence—and his subjects desert him, not because he is unfortunate, but because adversity renders him more severe*. But to this danger, arising from the reciprocal operation of rigour and weakness, I believe the Government of Napoleon is *less* exposed than that of any modern autocracy on record.

What is the peculiar genius of that Government? During the reign of democracy, every soldier assumed the citizen—each corps was a popular assembly—each barrack a club-room. Then was the time to address public opinion; and to work upon

* Multos timere debet, quem multi timent.

Bacon’s “Ornamenta rationalia.”

the feelings of the French: then might be the time, when all was motion—all fluctuation—to attempt, by well-judged arguments or measures, some change in the direction of a floating community. That season passed away. What has followed?

The French people, under the sway of Buonaparte, would be inadequately designated as a military people. In habits of obedience,—in first the extinction, then the abjuration of civil pursuits and objects, in unity of ambition, in ferocious lust of war and conquest, the nation differs little from a terrible assemblage of banditti:—if we describe them as an army, it is from a consideration of their numbers alone; it is a courtesy to which their collective character is not entitled. The same discipline which restrains a thousand men, is in France extended to thirty millions. Their principle of subordination is purely military. The citizen has rankled into the soldier. The spirit which impels them is nothing like loyalty to a Sovereign: from the Marshal to the private grenadier, it is that of blind submission to a predatory chief. The code Napoleon, in all its provisions, calculates upon the inactive body of the nation as a minister, a purveyor, an appendage to those who are in the field. Nor has the Usurper failed to adapt his yoke to the wearers, nor to inspire them with his own restless passions. We learn from innumerable sources, that the natural and gentle current of feeling proper to civilized life has merged in a flood of warlike sympathies. We are told by no

incompetent observer*, that "throughout all France, the note of military preparation drowns every other indication of activity." That "the future empire of France over the nations of the earth is exultingly proclaimed in all the songs of the theatres, and in public discourses of every description." "Even the gaunt and ragged beings who prowl about the streets,—the famished outcasts, *beggared by the Revolution*, who haunt the Boulevards, &c. all appear to forget, for a moment, their own miseries, in anticipating the brilliant destinies of the empire,—and contemplating Paris in prospective, as the Metropolis of the world." This needs no comment. We have here the oblivion of misery by the most miserable,—the forgiveness of injury by the most injured,—when the martial glory of France presents itself to the haggard eye of famine and desperation, defrauded at once of relief and vengeance, by the national aggrandizement which they invoke.

Nor is the portrait overcharged with terrors. Has not each succeeding danger elicited from Buonaparte fresh proofs of *power*? Have we ever arrived at the extremity of his resources—or found his dominion shake? Have not all our prophecies recoiled upon us? At this moment, suppose Buonaparte driven within the Rhine, is he vanquished? Have we destroyed him? No; and it may be securely pre-

* Walsh, p. 24, 25, 26.—Ninth edition.

dicted, that if, after beating his present army, and pursuing him sword in hand to Mayence, we and our Allies act on our old principles,—trusting that Providence will finish what human valour has begun,—we shall but afford this tyrant another occasion of evincing that he can use adversity to more advantage, than we our prosperous fortune. Whenever Rome made peace, she was victorious. Buonaparte, beaten, will urge his followers to wage eternal war. Let us drop all thoughts of negociation (for *negociate* he may) until we have left him breathless and worn out. We have no second hope but that of servitude. He never will sign a treaty,—such a treaty as would not leave the Germans at his mercy,—until he gains a battle, or until France deserts him. By cutting off from him all chance of foreign victory, we may, indeed, effect the dissolution of his empire—but there are no other means. When the conscription laws are successfully resisted—or the active population exhausted—or when the Conscripts refuse to fight,—then only may we offer Buonaparte fair terms of pacification. Every candid man will judge how far the Confederates appear to be, while I address you, from driving the French people to insurrection, or the troops to mutiny, when little short of 300,000 Conscripts can be raised without an audible murmur. This subject shall be resumed and continued without delay. It is of inconceivable interest, and of boundless magnitude. The brief conclusion from what has yet been stated is, that the efforts of the

coalesced Powers ought to be invariably *stimulated*, not relaxed, by victory;—that if I describe the enemy to be dreadful, it is because I feel that we ought, and are able, to make ourselves more dreadful;—that the Legislature should vie with the Executive Government, and the nation with both, in the contribution of men, money, and energy, when all are essential to the rights and happiness of England.

VETUS.

LETTER XXXIII.

Speech from the Throne.

Nov. 6, 1813.

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- “Aspiring
 “To set himself in glory above his peers,
 “He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
 “If He opposed; and with ambitious aim
 “Against the throne and monarchy of God,
 “Rais’d impious war in Heav’n, and battle proud,
 “With vain attempt. Him the Almighty pow’r
 “Hurl’d headlong flaming from th’ ethereal sky,
 “With hideous ruin and combustion, down—”

PAR. LOST, B. i. l. 38.

SIR,

FROM scenes of gay and grateful revelry, it is time to recal this manly people to the arduous duties which await them. Their work proceeds gloriously; but it is not ended. Incessant labour is the price affixed by Providence to every thing valuable on earth. As the cares of a man in private life increase for the most part with his fortunes, so a nation, freed from imminent and present evil, has next to embark in more complex provisions for futurity.

The fourth day after that on which I last addressed you*, changed the probabilities on which I had ar-

* VETUS 32 was transmitted to *The Times* on the 30th of October—the dispatches from Leipsic arrived on the 3d of November following.

gued, into official facts. The battles of Leipsic are, indeed, unmatched in the annals of modern war. The time itself (if the conquerors act up to the time) has made them absolutely decisive; and has left to these champions of the commonwealth of Europe no other task than “to improve their success—and to finish the work of victory.” At such a crisis there is nothing of so great importance for us, as to consider, what *ought to be* the result of these exploits—to Europe generally, and to England most of all. It is a consideration which will embrace the principles that bind us to the Grand Alliance,—the specific objects for which we ought to contend,—and, collaterally, the mode by which it would be most expedient to pursue them.

On each of these points we have found in the Speech of the Prince Regent to his Parliament, if not the means of tranquillizing every fear, at least a clue to direct our most essential enquiries.

That State Paper is, upon the whole, an admirable document.

It describes with moderation and truth. It reasons fairly. It exhibits a general view of the engagements, the pretensions, and the principles of the British Government—at once frank, temperate, and enlightened.

Such an Address to the assembled Legislature would naturally draw forth either tributes or commentaries, characteristic of those on whom devolved the privilege or duty of debate.

Marquis Wellesley, in the House of Lords, followed

the seconder of the Address to the throne, with congratulations on the prospects of the Empire and of mankind, becoming a patriot and philanthropist—and with the applauses of a generous friend to those to whose zealous diligence our success and that of our Allies might in great part be attributed.

Lord Grenville's sentiments did him equal honour. He whose early functions, as a Minister, had been vexed by the growth of this tremendous anarchy, now hailed its approaching dissolution. He approved the tenor of the Royal language; and threw out some good old English doctrine as to the terms of peace which he would exact for Holland.

But it is to the speech of the Earl of Liverpool, that I am most desirous to attract your observation. Prime Minister of England, the language of the Sovereign is his; and the sentiments which he uttered when that language was under discussion must be regarded as the more entitled to notice, inasmuch as they contain the Noble Lord's exposition of the system which he has himself adopted—his own translation of his own words.

It may not be disagreeable to a Minister to learn, that if he errs, it is on the side of virtue. I pass over for the present what the newspapers ascribe to the noble Earl, as the opinions delivered by him in Parliament, on the origin, the nature, and prospects of the coalition. It will be my business at subsequent opportunities to speak repeatedly and largely on these topics. My immediate attention is directed to his views and professions on the subject of a

peace with France. When we look to the inconceivable increase of power accruing to the Executive Government of any country, from the continuance of a state of war, it is no small proof of integrity in the Minister, to act upon a determined bias towards pacification. With this strong sense of the purity of Lord Liverpool's feelings, but of the dreadful mischief of his reasonings, and of the ruin that must attend them, if carried into practical negotiation, I record and justify my deep dissent from his whole doctrine, so far as it relates to the spirit of the grand object for which we contend—the establishment of a just and lasting peace.

“I would not, my Lords, have any thing asked from our enemies, which we ourselves, in similar circumstances, would refuse.”—These are the expressions imputed to Lord Liverpool, by the *Morning Post*—and they are to be taken as explaining (or possibly confounding) the passage of the Speech from the Throne, which follows—“No disposition to require from France sacrifices of any description inconsistent with her honour, or just pretensions as a nation, will ever be on my part, or on that of his Majesty's Allies, an obstacle to peace.”

Now, Sir, of whom do we speak? who are those “enemies”—named by Lord Liverpool? According to his Royal Highness, “the French nation!” And what is that “nation?” To us a rank non-entity. We have nothing to do with the French nation. Our business is with Napoleon Buonaparte—he is the Representative of what once was France. It is with

Buonaparte we must negociate—it is Buonaparte's *rights*—Buonaparte's pretensions—Buonaparte's sacrifices—Buonaparte's *honour*! that we are to respect—to spare—and to confide in! Good God, Sir, what language is this? What are the pretensions—the “rights” of Buonaparte? Who is to be the judge of these rights? We and our Allies! I pray Heaven it may be so; but much reason have we to apprehend from the Minister's declaration, that Buonaparte may have no trifling latitude allowed him in establishing the basis of his own rights, and in settling the limit of his own concessions.

I am willing to admit that, speaking generally, the peace is most likely to be secure, which offers the most entire reciprocity of advantages. This, however, is merely a general maxim, founded on a broad and abstract observation of mankind; but by no means just where one of the parties must be held a perfect *lusus naturæ*,—an exception to every rule,—a standing defiance to every principle. Where your enemy is of the same species with yourself, you may discreetly deal as you would be dealt by. If the French Government, such as we have already tried it, were capable of being conciliated by generous treatment,—if France, under the military despotism of Buonaparte, were to place her honour in the maintenance of her own undoubted rights,—if she put forward no pretensions inconsistent with the rights of neighbouring nations,—if she were, as she is not, *disposed* to preserve and

reverence “ the relations of peace and amity,”—then would Lord Liverpool’s avowal be as wise, as it is well intentioned,—that he would judge for France by England in similar circumstances. But what is the sense entertained by Buonaparte of that honour and those rights which we have solemnly bound Great Britain and her Allies to respect? His honour is incurable ambition; his rights are those of universal conquest: his law is force: his peace is perfidy. To correct and substantiate the Noble Lord’s expression, he must go much farther. Before he can change circumstances with the hostile Ruler, he must clothe himself with *the nature* of the Corsican. He must become, like him, restless, turbulent, insatiable, cruel, and remorseless,—a breaker of oaths,—a contemner of treaties,—an encroacher upon the natural and social freedom of all men. He must consider himself an unsafe party to any compact, before he can make his own feelings, in the circumstances of Buonaparte, a legitimate measure of those conditions which England is authorised to impose. To do as you would be done by is, to be sure, the best of Christian maxims; but is it a prudent principle (*or was it ever so designed?*) of conduct towards those who have set themselves loose from the restraints and obligations of the Christian character? The honest man and the hardened knave have not only different moral monitors within them, but they have opposite estimates of interest and enjoyment. A swindler with five thousand pounds in his possession feels more delight

in stealing one, than in the fair use of his irreproachable five thousand. I lament, therefore, and protest against this charitable doctrine, that England is to place her own unsuspected and defensive policy,—her unprovoked sufferings, and future safety, on a level with the aggressions, the well-earned miseries, and treacherous rapacity of the original and obdurate offender.

We have been plunged into the horrors of war by the criminal and atrocious injustice of France. We have been compelled to sacrifice tens of hundreds of millions,—we have witnessed the ruin of our most industrious manufacturers and most opulent merchants,—we have bled from the veins of 100,000 heroes,—we have been reduced from superfluities to necessities,—and from necessities to nothing;—and through whose monstrous wickedness have we suffered this? and for what have we toiled, and bled, and famished? Is it that we should seize no compensation for what we have lost? Is it that we should end as we began? Alas! are we indeed enabled to do so? Will Buonaparte pay our debts—the debts in which he alone has involved us?—the taxes which *he* has imposed upon us and upon our children? Let him do this—and we may, perhaps, resign our conquests.

Should the Prince Regent or his Minister have no other meaning than that we shall make peace without demanding any portion of old France—I accede to the declaration: it holds out to our enemy sufficient safety—sufficient grandeur, in peace. It is

liberal enough: ay—with any regard to justice—more than liberal. What were the two well-known desiderata of Mr. Pitt in the progress of the war of 1793? *Indemnity* for the past—and *security* for the future. They were just and becoming objects—and do honour to the memory of him by whom they were avowed. They were relinquished by that bold and zealous Briton, only because they were then unattainable. And can Lord Grenville—can Lord Liverpool forget their own participation in the policy of Mr. Pitt? Will they insist that we have now less to deplore, or less to fear, or less inducement to act upon these double considerations? And can they now bring themselves to forego, when actually in our hands, the blessings they once prized, and vainly prayed for?

What is there—I do not say of her old possessions—but of her recent spoils, ravished from the unoffending, the industrious, and the brave, which Corsican France will not surrender with reluctance? Which of them will she not pretend it imports her “honour” to retain? Has she not crowned herself Queen of Italy? Has she not entered the Hanseatic towns upon her muster-roll? Has she not claimed Holland as a droit of Admiralty? Are these to be acknowledged as legitimate members of her gigantic body? Is the Danish pirate, who has ever held England in abhorrence, to be spared by us, that he may be hired by Buonaparte to threaten our shores, and to harass the navigation of the Baltic? And must we resign the captured colonies,—those mines of

wealth, and cradles of maritime splendour,—that our inveterate, nay, involuntary persecutor, may sooner be prepared to repeat the experiment of our destruction? If so, I again ask—what have we fought for?

It is plain that I go upon a single assumption,—and if it be denied, the argument is over. I will not reason with any man who asserts that we can ever conciliate or satisfy Buonaparte,—or rely for our protection upon any thing but *the weakness* to which we reduce him. The character of the French themselves, when they were a nation, was in this respect unchangeable. Has England yet to learn the methodism of kindness and “moderation” in her treaties? What has she ever gained by the scandalous facility of her diplomatic system? Have the disgraces entailed by her negociators ever yet procured her a single friend—or softened a rival—or averted a war? Must we make ready for another Utrecht? or a peace of 1763,—or in sackcloth and ashes bow down before a second Amiens? What symptoms, I say, have we yet discovered of satisfaction, temper, friendship, or forbearance, communicated to the venomous breast of Buonaparte by the prodigality of colonial and territorial incense with which we regaled his nostrils at the peace of 1802? Did not his demands rise exactly with our concessions?—his insults with our submissions?—his hatred and contempt with our base forgiveness? Is it for such an ignominious humiliation of our name, and character, and memory, and glory, that we are again to throw

up all claims both to recompense and to protection; and to behold a brutal gang of denationalised Britons whirl the triumphant car of their country's destroyer through the streets of the capital, and before the dishonoured palaces of their King?

We have but one security. Let us keep all we conquer. Let our Allies keep all they can acquire. The principle was admitted by Buonaparte himself—that each should preserve by treaty, that of which they could not be deprived by war. Then it suited the convenience of Napoleon. Now it corresponds with our's. Are his interests to be always consulted?

This subject is closely interwoven with that of my former letter. It will be my immediate care to trace their affinity. Lord Liverpool, since the commencement of the Session of 1812, has greatly and nobly disappointed me. He has brought Great Britain to honour. He occupies an eminence creditably won. Backed by the nation, let him stand by the nation. We must have—not a peace—but a glorious peace. The negociator of that of Amiens owes it to his countrymen, whom he mortified,—and to his own reputation, which as a negociator he has not yet retrieved.

Although the signature of a treaty with France may not be attainable within many months, its principles and features ought to be long contemplated by the people; and fixed in their understanding, their recollection, and their feelings. The vigour and energy of our measures in war must be powerfully affected by the tone of our pacific meditations.

In the well-judged language of the Minister himself, "our efforts must be augmented rather than relaxed." The tide of revolution ebbs apace. But it is our duty to rouse into resistless action those seeds of wisdom and of public virtue, which its receding waters have lodged in the bosom of society.

VETUS.

LETTER XXXIV.

*Principles of Negotiation—with the Conditions of
a Roman Peace.*

SIR,

Nov. 12, 1813.

THAT the hour of victory should be the season of increased exertion, is a truth which Lord Liverpool deserves praise for enforcing; and on which, I trust, he will find the nation ready to outstrip his desires. But as there are no labours to be shunned, and no sacrifices to be felt, when they lead directly to a *glorious* peace,—so is there no triumph which may not be rendered useless or ridiculous, by a timid and prostrate spirit of negotiation.

My country will bear witness to my persevering zeal, in defence of a system of vigorous warfare. Whence has that zeal arisen? From a genuine abhorrence of war,—from a conscientious love of peace,—which I would nevertheless accelerate, only to dictate; that we might obtain it speedily, and that we might enjoy it long. We must, says the ambitious tyrant to his soldiers,—we must “conquer peace from England.” Let us, says the philosopher and sage of England, have peace in “the spirit of peace.” There is little practical difference between these maxims of Burke and of Buonaparte. He alone who treats from the temple of victory can exact such *reparation* for his various wrongs, and

such *protection* to his rights hereafter, as will enable him to laugh at all the approaches of fear, suspicion, distrust, or jealousy,—and to indulge, without constraint or reluctance, the feelings of good fellowship, and “the spirit” of peace.

From the recommendation of warlike energy and devotion, which could be justified by nothing but the assurance of an ample recompense, there appears to me sufficient in those words of the Minister, which I have lately quoted, to divert most powerfully the public mind. The Noble Lord has not, indeed, dwelt on particulars. The occasion did not require it. The temper—the tendency of his pacific avowal, is that by which we ought to be alarmed. I shall rejoice to hear that my construction of his language is erroneous; for if the people of England were once to sanction it as their creed, that the permanency of this peace, and the security of their own welfare, were to be measured by the degree of complaisance evinced in its conditions,—and by the quantum of satisfaction to be conveyed to the enemy—(that enemy Buonaparte!)—two things are evident to the meanest apprehension—namely, that we ought to submit to-morrow—and that any farther inroad upon the national resources, in support of a war to be so concluded, must be deemed a wanton, wasteful, and most preposterous sacrifice.

As I plead guilty to the charge of calling aloud upon the nation for continued and augmented efforts against France, it becomes necessary to reserve my own assent to these—I hope doubtful—expressions

of the Minister. Lest the name of Vetus should be written amongst those who would reduce an atrocious and persecuting tyrant, only to reanimate him at the expense of a gallant people, in seeking whose destruction he has thrown himself at their feet; it is essential that I should suspend all appeal to their liberality and their courage, until they shall be satisfied of the purposes for which both are wanted; since, if we are to forego the end for which we toil and perish, it were madness to endure these sufferings any longer,—and since the amount of what we have already suffered and *gained* is more than enough to entitle Great Britain to sound and firm principles of negociation, and to secure and unbending terms of peace.

Envied for her wealth, and formidable for her valour, England has been ridiculed for wasting the first by her subsidies, and disgracing the second by her treaties. Many occasional circumstances and causes may operate to justify a loan or donation of money, to her natural friend in a case of need; but it would be difficult to imagine any fair excuse, for surrendering, to her natural enemy, the possessions of which her sword has deprived him; which, if they are not worth preserving, are in *general* not worth winning; and which ought never to be given for the sake of peace, unless they have ceased to be maintainable by military power.

If it be objected that such a policy is of too grasping and ambitious a character, I tell the objector that it is a policy of pure defensive justice. To em-

bark in war for the sake of aggrandizing one's self, is a separate question from that now under consideration. A people who have originally no thought of encroaching on their neighbours may still be provoked and compelled, by unjust aggression, to undertake a series of foreign conquests for the mere protection of their own empire—and to adopt a resolute system of aggrandizement, as the surest and safest instrument of defence.

It is undoubtedly consonant to the first principles of justice, that the injured Sovereign should obtain both compensation and security. In common litigation we always find that the unsuccessful party—in other words, the aggressor—is forced to refund the whole expense in which he has involved his antagonist, whom he obliges to defend himself by law. How much more largely should that people be indemnified, who are driven to protect, not their property alone, but their liberty and their existence by arms?—who endure not only the expenses of a contest, but its multifarious terrors and desolations,—and whose precious blood and wounded happiness it is not in affluence or in glory to repay?

The base and abject spirit of English negotiation has for ages been unparalleled in the history of the world. Setting aside the unlucky contest by which she lost America, every war in which this country has been engaged for more than an hundred and twenty years may be fairly derived from a strong and indisputable necessity—with reference immediately to her own interests and honour, or to those of

Christendom at large. From the circumstances, therefore, in which these wars had their origin, she was invariably authorized to demand by treaty a full redress for the wrongs she had sustained, and *additional* safeguards to her own future tranquillity. Yet what have been her compacts from Utrecht down? What have been her rewards, but so many cessions of open and legitimate conquest? What her acquisitions, but millions of taxes, and hundreds of millions of debt? What her securities, but a perpetual growth of hatred, insolence, and power, on the part of her eternal enemy?

In India, Captain Pasley well observes, we have followed a course both of enterprize and negotiation, diametrically the reverse of our proceedings in every other quarter of the globe. And how has it succeeded? Why, victory, aided by political firmness and foresight, has borne its natural fruits. The wars with Tippoo Saib and the Mahrattas were in the strictest sense defensive. Had we not been victorious beyond all European calculation or example, we must have been expelled from India. Had we sacrificed, for the name of peace, the solid results of our glorious victories, we must have encountered *fresh wars*. We acted on a nobler and safer policy. We conquered wherever we fought,—and kept what we conquered. The safety of our dominions was guaranteed by their successive aggrandizements; and we have erected on the Ganges a mighty empire, eminent above the sovereignties of the East, in

the same degree as was the Roman empire beyond those of the ancient world.

How did Rome herself become the queen of nations? By keeping her treaties on a perfect level with her victories. The Conscript Fathers would have felt the immortal city shaken as by an earthquake, had they prescribed conditions of peace which should leave the vanquished enemy to boast that they might combat Rome, and be defeated by the Romans, *with impunity*. Her Senate—the most enlightened body of military Statesmen that ever ruled the earth—knew well that to beat an adversary in the field was to lay the foundation of never-ending toil and peril, unless they stript him of those resources which would be made the ministers of his vengeance—a passion inseparable from defeat. There is scarcely a record of any treaty dictated by Rome in the days of her martial greatness, which does not impose a large exaction of money, and a woful reduction of naval and military force, on the necks of the hostile people—besides the surrender to the Romans, or their allies, of whatever provinces best suited their inclination. There is at this moment before my eye a sketch of the conditions granted by Scipio Africanus to Carthage, who finished a war of seventeen years—at some periods nearly fatal to the very name of Rome—by gaining the single but decisive battle of Zama *.

* *Leipsic*—if not, it is our own fault,

Changing the appellations of antiquity to those of our own time, the following is an exact copy of some few amongst the articles of that celebrated treaty:—

“ We permit the French nation to live according
 “ to their own laws and customs ; and to retain all
 “ the cities and provinces they had in Europe *before*
 “ *the war*.* (N.B. This includes the acknowledgment
 “ of Buonaparte—but not the surrender to France
 “ of the Austrian Netherlands.)

“ Lord Wellington shall immediately abstain from
 “ molesting them.

“ France shall deliver up to England *all her ships*
 “ *of war*, except ten frigates.

* The first article here inserted is the identical basis since adopted by the Allies in all their proclamations and state papers on the subject of peace. The fourth article quoted by VETUS from the treaty with Carthage contains, almost *totidem verbis*, the recent proposition of the Continental powers,—“ that the absolute independence by sea and land of all the States existing in Europe, at the eve of the French Revolution, shall be restored and secured by the consent of France.”—Spain, Sicily, and the intervening islands, with the single exception of Corsica, which may be termed, not inaptly, the political “ Palæstine,” are already safe. We unbelievers, it is true, have a direct interest in the seizure of this jacobinical Jérusalem;—but where is the spirit of another Saladin to be met with ?

It would be an amusing, but a vain attempt, to describe the agonies of certain patriots amongst us, on the appearance of this letter. One might imagine from their fury, their desperation, their malice, that England had actually obtained from France terms no less glorious than those which Scipio had exacted from the humbled rivals of his country.

“ She shall restore to the Allies of England *every*
 “ *thing she has usurped* from them, or any of them ;
 “ and shall enter into an alliance with them all.

“ She shall supply the British troops in Gascogne
 “ with rations—and *pay the Portuguese and Spanish*
 “ *Auxiliaries*, till the return of the Ambassadors
 “ whom she shall depute to London, to have the
 “ peace ratified there.

“ She shall pay to Great Britain in five (50) years,
 “ ten millions sterling, in equal payments :—(a small
 “ and mean remuneration for our losses.)

“ She shall put into Lord Wellington’s hands
 “ one hundred hostages, such as he shall choose ;—
 “ (the *Punic* faith of her ruler being quite pro-
 “ verbal).

“ Neither the peace, nor even a truce, shall take
 “ place, until Buonaparte shall have restored to
 “ Great Britain the ships and effects (and *English*
 “ *travellers*) taken from her *during the former truce*
 “ (of Amiens) *.”

Spain, Sicily, and all the intervening islands of the Mediterranean, and all the foreign colonies of Carthage, being already in the hands of Rome—Scipio would not hear one word upon the subject of any provision in regard to them—nor suffer their ulterior possession to be entered upon by Hannibal, as a proper question for debate.

* The English reader may consult Hooke’s *Roman Hist.* 2d vol. p. 296, quarto, London, 1756. I have followed him nearly word for word.

Here is a parallel * worthy of deep reflection—here a bright example for imitation. Thus it was that the Britain of former times had “indemnity for the past, and security for the future.”

VETUS.

* The parallel, in all its parts, is not a little curious.

LETTER XXXV.

Views of War and Peace.

SIR, Nov. 17, 1813.

It is the more desirable to follow up the question of a peace with France, because negotiations may be resorted to by all the Belligerent Powers, much sooner than any of us are aware. This is just the moment to dread the entertainment of a pacific overture, when our chief goods are in prospect, and those of the enemy in possession,—when, therefore, we have every thing to hope, and he to fear, from the vigorous prosecution of hostilities*.

But whether we begin to treat through the ensuing winter, or postpone the negotiation until twelve months hence, it is essential that the people should resolutely make up their minds to those principles and provisions, which alone can secure to them a real and lasting peace.

I have stated to you as the only legitimate basis of a treaty, if not on the part of the Continental Allies, at least for England herself, that *she should conquer all she can, and keep all she conquers*. This is not by way of retaliation, however just, upon an obdurate and rapacious enemy,—but as an indispensable condition of her proper safety and existence.

* The Allies were then advancing through Germany, and Beauharnois flying from the Austrians.

I trust, Sir, that nothing which has been officially declared in Parliament can have sprung from a wish to prepare the public feeling of this country for a list of concessions, as the purchase of peace. It is not enough that Ministers should require the support of the nation in their warlike measures. They have a right to demand our hearty concurrence, in imposing on Buonaparte strong terms of pacification. My anxiety on this subject, therefore, has a double aim—that Ministers should boldly demand our concurrence, and that the empire, with one accord, should grant it.

The first policy of a wise people * is to make rival nations afraid to disturb them,—to impress their

* It is undoubtedly “the first policy of a wise people.”—But, say the traitors to English honour and greatness, by the same rule the “first policy of our enemies also is to do the same thing”—and “we must then fight on for ever.” Vetus has never asserted the falsehood, that it is the policy of England *to attack* other nations—but that certain countries having, as England has (it is to be presumed), the means of repelling aggression—and having, as England has proved that she possesses, the power of *punishing* aggression, by depriving an unjust enemy of a great portion of his strength, it is wise and essential to the future safety of such states, to leave upon the body of the offending nation such a deep and sore memento of the evil consequences attending its own injustice, as may deter that nation from similar crimes hereafter. For a people, acting on a defensive system, to reward an invader by surrendering at a peace the fruits of its own wise and brave exertion in the maintenance of its own rights—is to place all the chances of war on one side, and that the side of the party offering the wrong—and to hold out a plain encouragement to everlasting injury and oppression.

enemies with a terrifying sense, that to attack them is to sustain not only transient defeats, but deep, grievous, and irrecoverable losses,—and to hold in abhorrence any peace, which shall not be a living record of their own superiority, and a monument worthy of those warriors through whose noble blood it was obtained. Nothing can be more opposite to this great policy than to fight, and to surrender the fruit of our successes. We may be assured that those with whom we contend are ready enough to improve *their* victories. If we are not equally so, we shall never be at rest. If the enemy beats us, he wins our possessions—if we beat him, we restore all. What more profitable game could he desire? Where the adverse party risks at the worst a few thousand men, we risk both men and empire.

Truly at this rate our neighbours must be fools, if they leave us one week's repose.

The same argument which goes to justify a war, prescribes war measures of the most active and determined character. The very object, that of weakening the enemy, for which we pursue those vigorous measures, and strip him of his acquisitions, renders it necessary to keep him in that state of weakness by which he will be deterred from repeating his attack; and, therefore, to hold inflexibly what we have acquired.

We are taught, indeed, to take for granted, that a peace whose conditions bear hard on either party will be the sooner broken by that party,—and that we have an indirect interest, therefore, in sacrificing

a portion of our conquests. This language is in favour with the two extremes of English faction. The blind opponents of every Minister who happens to be engaged in conducting a war, can see no danger in national dishonour; and cry out for peace with double vehemence, whenever it is least likely to be concluded well. The dependants, on the other hand, of any feeble government, will strive to lower the expectations of the country,—to exclaim against immoderate exertion,—to depreciate her powers in war, and her pretensions at a peace;—thus preparing an oblique defence for their employers, and undermining the honest disappointment of the people, when they reflect how little has been done by war, and how much undone by negotiation.

But besides being a factious expedient, it is a principle of action equally false and absurd. I deny that we effect any thing more by granting an enemy what are called favourable terms, than convince him that he may go to war with England, gratis. The conditions he obtains will encourage him to try the chance of another war, in the hope of a still more advantageous treaty. We make over the only valid security, the accession to our own strength, and the diminution of our rival's, by the resources and dominions which we have wrested from him; and we take in return the assumed security of his gratitude, or friendship, or want of inclination to destroy us.

Has this been the policy of any great state on record, ancient or modern, except ourselves? Sacrifices have, indeed, grown out of the necessities of all na-

tions; but has ever impudence, paradox, or folly, preached up to any people, save only to the dupes of England, the *wisdom* of restoring to the menace or finesse of a beaten enemy, what he has already yielded to her arms? Is it from Persians, Macedonians, Greeks, or Romans,—from Timour or Mahomet,—from Prussia or Muscovy,—from Austria, Spain, or France herself,—from communities that ever rose by manhood,—from those who founded, or those who preserved them,—that we have learned this maxim of spurious and mawkish beneficence? Is it true, that stipulations the most inexorable have this fearful tendency towards a renewal of war? Consider the peace by which the second Punic war was terminated, a few of whose least mortifying conditions I inserted at the close of my last letter,—was it of short continuance? Never had a nation such encouragement as Carthage, from the general events of that mighty contest,—never such provocation, from the terms of peace imposed,—to rid themselves of their shame by one glorious effort, and to grasp once more at the Empire of the world. That peace endured for fifty years,—and after being rendered more grievous by numberless intermediate cruelties, was finally put an end to by the Romans themselves,—that is, by those who had dictated all its provisions.

Look at the treaties of modern Europe,—and of our own day. Did this country, by the disgraceful concessions of 1763, satisfy the cravings of the French Court, or subdue its inveterate animosity? If so, to what shall we ascribe the alliance of France with our

American rebels a few years afterwards, when, in spite of her ruined finances and her peaceful King, she aimed a mortal blow at the British Monarchy?

Were the Powers that partitioned unhappy Poland so conciliated by her acquiescence in their first encroachments, as to abstain from offering her any second wrong?

Did the wretched complaisance of the leading Continental Courts, in their several treaties with France, Republican or Corsican, ensure their tranquillity even for a moment? Did it not rather aggravate and multiply the molestations, the injuries, and insults, which they were doomed to suffer?

Then comes the peace of Amiens—our peace of Amiens,—a peace, born, educated, nourished, and matured, in this very philanthropic spirit of gentleness and forgiveness. Let me not be misunderstood. I have no wish to substitute other negociators, in the room of those who plunged us into that shocking compact. They probably made about the same sort of terms that any other set of Parliamentary speakers would have done; because their terms were in fact approved by all the ostensible heads of parties: the peace, however, was on that account by no means less humbling, execrable, and vile. My hope would be to substitute not better men, but better principles, than those to which we stand indebted for that treaty.

In the war which preceded the truce of which I am speaking, the French Government involved us in considerably more than two hundred millions of debt.

In revenge for this, we took, with the single exception of the Mauritius, every valuable * colony they had in the world. The subsequent treaty did not stipulate that France should repay one shilling of the money which she had forced us to expend : but it did most strictly bind us to surrender every acre of those possessions, which might have served as some little security or equivalent. In other words, the mortgagee walked out of the premises, without the liquidation of any part of his claim—without satisfaction—without a bond—without a promise—nay, (smile not, reader), without *asking* for a single guinea ! The language of England was correctly what follows:—

“ You, Monsieur, have loaded me with unspeakable
 “ distresses and embarrassments,—you have robbed
 “ me of half my fortune, and reduced me to the brink
 “ of beggary,—you have torn away and made slaves
 “ of my friends and kindred,—you have dangerously
 “ wounded me, and murdered my beloved children,
 “ who armed to defend their parent,—but I pique
 “ myself on being so good a christian, that I shall be
 “ too happy to forget all this,—I, therefore, entreat
 “ you to forgive me for having borne these wrongs
 “ so patiently—do me the favour to take back some
 “ of your property which I happened to find where
 “ you had dropped it—and which, to say the truth,
 “ might still contribute to save me from sinking under the consequences of your persecutions;—but
 “ no matter—let us henceforth live lovingly together.

* St. Domingo was virtually lost to France.

“—since, if I may judge from your past conduct, I am sure you will prove the best of neighbours.” Well might Talleyrand boast after this, that his chef-d’œuvre was the peace of Amiens*!

But, it will be answered by the advocates of that treaty—Did we not recover Hanover? I acknowledge that we did.

The light in which Hanover ought to be considered requires some explanation. Had the hereditary dominions of the House of Brunswick been duly cultivated, extended, strengthened, and fostered by Great Britain, she need not have laboured to defend them in war by ridiculous and fruitless subsidies,—nor to recover them at every peace, by the disgraceful sacrifice of her colonial conquests. No man can think more favourably than I have ever done of the capabilities of Hanover—and of its contingent value to this country: but it is not Hanover, the unimproved Electorate,—it is Hanover, the centre of a mighty kingdom. Suppose that on the 1st of August, 1714, any man of common sense had been to form a conjecture, whether Brandenburg, resting on its own means, or Hanover, backed by the resources of the British empire, would in the course of a century become the most powerful state,—could he hesitate to pronounce that, in half the time, Hanover, not Prussia, must be the bulwark of the North of Germany? Could it occur to the wildest imagination,

* We held Ceylon, a Dutch—and Trinidad, a Spanish Colony: every thing French we abandoned.

that while Brandenburg seized the Austrian provinces on one side, and those of Poland on the other, Great Britain would leave *her* Electorate precisely as she had found it—and that, instead of Holland and Danish Zealand*, her natural prey, being annexed to Hanover, under British auspices—all three would, under different denominations, become members or dependencies of France? Yet such have been the fruits of a petty, shallow, and most improvident spirit of mercantile policy; which condescends to be rich, without aspiring to be great—and which forgets that there is nothing so dangerous as affluence, unsupported by military power. When, therefore, we speak of His Majesty's Electoral Dominions, we must distinguish between the naked and defenceless attitude in which the Councils of England have hitherto placed them,—and the state of vigorous independence which they ought long since to have assumed. Ha-

* It was, during the whole period of the Dutch and Danish subjection to France, the unquestioned right, and the obvious interest of this country, to have wrested both Zealand and Holland from her yoke. Zealand was ours, and we meanly or madly surrendered it; Holland would have been ours, had we boldly pledged ourselves to protect it. Vetus has long ago declared his sentiments on the morality of destroying Poland—when he refers, therefore, to the annexation of a part of it to Brandenburg, it is merely to contrast the growth of Prussia with the continued neglect with which we have treated Hanover—but by no means to recommend the same means of aggrandizement for both. On the contrary, Prussia has become great by an unremitting course of injustice; while the fairest and most lawful occasions of adding strength to his Majesty's German territory have been, we need not say despised, but even dreaded by the weak and sordid policy of Great Britain.

nover, as it reverted to us in 1802, was nothing. We gave up a mass of maritime possessions, which had been raised into magnificence by British capital—and which France could never have regained by arms. We got in exchange an impoverished and weakened province, lying at the mercy of France,—which the moment we should render it again worth robbing, she would not hesitate to reoccupy at her pleasure. What a contradictory and unintelligible caprice is this! We steadily discountenance the only means of enabling Hanover to protect herself, while she is in our hands; and after thus sacrificing all the benefits that could result from the acquisition to certain theories of commercial profit, we never fail to forego every solid commercial and naval settlement, for the recovery of a possession thus obstinately divested of its uses.

Let us descend to the ground-work of this argument. It is Buonaparte with whom we have to negotiate. If to soften and tranquillize that revolutionist be our aim, there is nothing for it but unlimited, unqualified submission. Towards such a man moderation in peace and war would be alike fatal to ourselves. His wish to destroy us remains under all circumstances the same; if it be not even more susceptible of increase from encouragement than from counteraction. Our safety is in his weakness—never in his will. We may act upon it, therefore, with unvarying confidence, that any cession made to Buonaparte as the price of peace will be converted by him into the means of war, and used as a weapon for our

overthrow. We must do as he does—have and hold. Nor can it be doubted that we have the full ability to enforce this resolute system. It is unquestionable, that to our characteristic want of firmness must be ascribed, on former occasions, the abandonment of so many advantages, which to keep was far easier than to acquire; and to the enemy's knowledge of this infirmity it is owing, that he has taken much less pains to disavow his contempt for us in the cabinet than to hide his terror in the field.

But at the present crisis there has devolved upon us a more than common labour. It is not enough that we reform ourselves: if the partnership of which we are members adopt a vicious course, we may be ruined by the faults of other nations. Germany has been cleared of the invaders. We are, therefore, on the eve of a new series of enterprizes. A second act of the drama is now commencing, and the plot and business of it should be distinctly laid down, or a confused and premature catastrophe may follow. Holland and Italy, if not the scenes, must at least be the objects of our approaching operations. The spark of hope is already kindled in the mind of these harassed regions. There will, however, be much for wisdom to regulate after courage shall have done her part. The best claim of the English Ministers to public support, is that they seem alive to the difficulties which surround them; and it will be confessed, that they have fairly purchased for their country a right to direct the efforts of the coalition.

On the specific ends of these exertions we are soon

to expatiate. The summary is this:—that within the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrennees, we should look for nothing from France;—that without these limits, we should leave her nothing;—that although we may enrich our neighbours with her colonial spoils, and thus attach them to our interests and system, we should remember that colonies are maritime power, and of all others most unfit subjects of restitution to Napoleon;—that his despotism over the French people may be probed to the bottom—but *ought not* to be, if it could be, destroyed,—for speaking as a downright English patriot, I would prefer for France the scourge of Buonaparte, to the healthier, and towards England not less hostile, sovereignty, of the banished House of Bourbon.

VETUS.

LETTER XXXVI.

Just Principles of Peace.

SIR,

NOVEMBER 30, 1813.

THE moment is not yet arrived, in which we shall have to consider the state of Holland under its most important point of view; that is, as it affects our political relations. The expulsion of the French from every part of the United Provinces was the inevitable result of those splendid victories which drove Buonaparte beyond the Rhine. It has given the Allies an accession of 40,000 men; and a military position of the highest value, on the immediate flank of an enemy advancing to the right of the river. What final effects this popular movement by the Dutch may have upon the future interests and prosperity of England, is a question to be discussed with deliberate caution,—with extreme solicitude,—and with the chance, I trust the distant chance, of its conducting us to no very gratifying conclusion*. I abstain altogether from this great topic, until events shall enable us to develop the means and consequences of Dutch independence in detail; and I resume, for the general subject of this letter, the just principles of a negotiation with the common enemy.

* Vide Preface.

The speech of Lord Castlereagh on the subsidiary treaties is of high importance to the public cause. I pass over the pecuniary arrangements for the present. They are matters of calculation, and will keep. But the impression made upon me by his language on the question of peace, is, I confess, most grateful to every English feeling. After describing the laudable solicitude of Ministers for the attainment of that first of earthly goods,—and dwelling with a degree of *unction* very palatable to Mr. Whitbread, on the temper with which they had chosen the hour of success as the fit opportunity for accepting the Austrian Mediation,—his Lordship added, what was worth all the rest—“*But, we must have a secure peace. We must not only recollect with whom we contend, but with whom we have to negotiate,—and never grant to such an enemy conditions, which, under the name of peace, would disarm this nation, and expose her to contingent dangers.*” These, I believe, were nearly the words: they certainly do not compromise his meaning. Here, then, the Noble Secretary has chased away every doubtful expression of his Colleague. The sentiment delivered by the Sovereign on the throne, is now given to us with a construction at which we need no longer be alarmed. I ask only that “*secure peace,*”—a peace consistent with English *safety*,—void of the shadow of regard or indulgence to the “*pretensions and honour,*” otherwise the ambition and arrogance of Buonaparte, which, as compared with the relief of one day’s hunger to the meanest peasant in this our native country, are

baubles not worth a name. Let the Foreign Secretary act up to these principles, and in his negotiation with hostile Powers maintain the pledge thus tendered to a British Parliament;—he may command the support of every Englishman, with the highest rewards that a grateful people, and that impartial posterity, can bestow. Let him forget these professions, and entangle us in a treaty, framed according to the old poisonous spirit of sordid, vulgar, shuffling, reptile diplomacy;—no tribute of respect or confidence which I am disposed to pay this Minister shall interrupt my prayer, that the worst penalties of impeachment may be held in readiness for the perpetrator of such a crime, and that the curse of a blasted memory may follow him to future ages.

What means the impious outcry raised by degenerate Englishmen, against the mere chance,—nay, the remote possibility,—of a peace, whose terms would be honourable to their country? Whence arises this profligate and abandoned yell with which these traitors insult us? Are they still in pay? Is their patron still rich enough to bribe them? When we demand compensation for our dreadful sufferings, it is but what justice grants. When we call for security, it is what our existence requires. Yet, when these undoubted rights and essential safeguards of an injured people are asserted, it is nothing less than blaspheming the holy supremacy of Buonaparte!

It is asked, do we propose “to humble France:” do we propose “to destroy her?” If so, we “breathe eternal war;”—if so, we convert the aggressor into

the sufferer, and transfer all the dignity and authority of justice to the enemy against whom we arm.

Sir, the question of peace, or "eternal warfare," is not a naked question of right and wrong. It is a question whose morality is determined by its reference to *our preservation* as a people. To such interrogatories, I answer without reserve, that we ought to exact precisely that measure of humiliation from France, and that we do recommend that critical advance towards her destruction, which may combine the utmost attainable satisfaction for our past grievances, with a solid protection to our future interests and welfare. From France, since the fatal battle of Hastings, what has this nation of Saxon warriors ever yet endured but injury and affliction? Modern France has no principle so deeply rooted as that of everlasting enmity to England. I confess, for this reason, that in my uncorrupted judgment, the best security for Great Britain, and, therefore, if practicable, her most imperious duty, would be the absolute conquest of France. But since that, unfortunately, is an event which at present we are not likely to accomplish, the second best security is to reduce her, if we can, to a degree of weakness consistent with our immediate repose. If the enemy should be so far borne away by his hatred as to command his emissaries in London to announce, that he prefers waging "eternal war," to the acceptance of conditions, which his own persevering and atrocious outrages have rendered in the mind of every Englishman indispensable to the safety

of these islands, the woful alternative of “perpetual war” very plainly originates not with Great Britain, but with Buonaparte; and his hirelings in the British metropolis seem to be aware, that since his military prospects have faded out of sight, the most useful service they now can perform is to paint their hero as an audacious and invincible mendicant, a perfect magician at making bargains,—who can juggle us out of our rights, our possessions, and our senses,—and for whom it is even our duty, as philosophical Statesmen, to balance the defeat of his violences by furthering the success of his frauds.

Wherever the cause of Buonaparte is to be supported, or the policy proposed for this Government exclaimed against as harsh, intemperate, and frantic, it is the fashion to bring forward whole battalions of foreign jurists, to convict us by virtue of that law of nations, which it has been the boast of France to violate and supersede. I am not much enamoured of quotation. But as M. Vattel is in every body’s hands, and is the usual resort in such cases, let us hear what he says in behalf of England, “An equitable conqueror, deaf to the suggestions of ambition and avarice, will make a just estimate of what is due to him; that is to say, of the thing which has been the object of the war (if the thing itself is no longer recoverable), and of the *damages and expenses of the war*—and will retain no more of the enemy’s property than what is precisely sufficient to furnish the equivalent. But if he has to do with a perfidious, restless, and

dangerous enemy, he will, by way of punishment, deprive him of some of his towns or provinces, and keep them to serve as a barrier to his own dominions. Nothing is more allowable than to weaken an enemy who has rendered himself suspected and formidable. The lawful end of punishment is *future security*. *” Were not a right so fixed as ours in the law of nature rather impaired by a recourse to written authority, here is one, to all appearance, predestined for this country, and for the present age.

An attempt has been made upon the minds of some of our readers, as if Vetus were averse to any pacification with Buonaparte. If the charge were just, it would not be disgraceful. Many wise and virtuous men are to be found, who maintain the incompetency of this Corsican, under any circumstances, to discharge the obligations of a state of peace. There are multitudes of honest men, who firmly believe his mere existence as a Sovereign to threaten at all times *our* existence as a nation. Can such persons be regarded criminal for preferring open war with an enemy, to the name of peace with a traitor? “*Rien que le Traité d’Amiens !*” Was this “the spirit of peace?” The seizure made of Switzerland and Piedmont?—were these the securities of peace? The Prussian fortresses—Pomerania—the Hanse Towns—Holland—Spain—are these encouragements to “a relation of amity” with Buonaparte? If many people, therefore, and wise ones too, deprecate the formation of any

* Vattel, B. III. ch. 13. sec. 191.

compact with a man, whom no compact ever had force to govern, they argue, one might imagine, on no very feeble grounds. If such persons have the good or bad fortune to be convinced, that a ruler who signs no treaty which he does not violate is not a party with whom England ought to negotiate, I cannot censure it as a very illogical deduction. If there follow from such a principle, as its natural consequence, a war of indefinite duration with France, it is not a free choice, but a sad necessity; and it infers no farther wish of interference with the French people in the selection of their own rulers, than belongs to the paramount duty of Englishmen,—the defence and preservation of Great Britain. But while I applaud the feeling, I dispute the fact. It does not appear to me, that a peace with Buonaparte is now unattainable on terms sufficient for our safety—that is, on such terms as will deprive him of *the power* to disturb us. Regarding France under every known form of Government as the irreconcilable foe of England, I have beheld, with almost unmingled joy, the growth and accumulation of this savage despotism. Within these few days my opinion was briefly given, that if the reign of Buonaparte over the French nation were to be terminated by a single word—a word ought never to be spoken. Why? Is it from affection for the tyrant—or from a taste for tyranny? Surely not. It is from the strong conviction, that by no other means so decisive as the existence of this man, with his consuming, depressing, and degrading system of government, can we hope to see France crushed, and

ground down below the capacity of contending, for ages to come, with the force of the British Empire, moved by the spirit of freedom. When there appeared to some persons a chance of his enslaving the Continent, and hurling the mass of subjugated nations against the shores of England—then, indeed, those who entertained such fears were justified in seeking his personal and political destruction. But once released from the terror of his arm, what genuine Englishman can fail to rejoice in the privilege of consigning Buonaparte and the French people to the paradise of each other's embraces?

The “soft nonsense whispered” throughout the London coteries, is all, it seems, in favour of a restoration of these Bourbons. The Bourbon family are doubtless entitled to respect—precisely that species and degree of respect which is always due to the unfortunate. What claims they have on the esteem or gratitude of England,—or to any good offices on her part, save only that of a charitable and hospitable shelter,—it is for others, more clear-sighted than I am, to explain. They have exhibited in the persons of their three last monarchs almost as much benevolence towards this country as Buonaparte himself has been accused of. Without possessing a tithe of his ability, they have yielded nothing in disposition. Lewis the 14th left ample evidence on record of his pure regard for the balance of power, and of his persevering attachment to the liberties of the Dutch. His dissolute successor, in the seven years' war, conferred upon us and Europe nearly equal obligations,

by his views towards Prussia, Hanover, and our Colonies. Nor did the grace and ornament of the blood of Bourbon—the last of the Lewis's—suffer martyrdom, until he had torn America from the British Crown. Such are the blessings we owe this banished family. Such are their demands upon the *gratitude* of Great Britain. What, then, are their pretensions, on the ground of true British *policy*? To restore a legitimate Monarch? I deny that the Bourbons are more legitimate Kings of France in the year 1813 than the Stuarts, within 20 years of our Revolution, were legal Sovereigns of England. The French republic took by forfeiture. Buonaparte takes by conquest. But grant their legitimacy—how does it affect us? For God's sake, let us reason this matter calmly—like English Statesmen, not borne away by a torrent of headlong, royal, flaming, unreflecting sympathies; no, nor by rash commercial speculations—seeking a new customer in the revival of France; but under the impression that we are charged by Providence, as our prime and sacred duty, with the political independence, welfare, and happiness, of *this* our native land. The question, whether Great Britain ought or not to assist the return of the Bourbons to the Throne of France, is resolved by the answer to another question—“Would such a restoration be advantageous to “France herself?” There can be no doubt that it would. Looking forward half a century, which, in the life of nations, is nothing, it is very clear, that such an event would recal her inhabitants to many old principles of action, fitted by time

itself to their genius and their wants—that it would gradually re-open their ancient sources of prosperity—that it would lead to the former steady system of aggrandizement and preponderance, cultivated so successfully by France under the old regime—and thus qualify her to resume that relative ascendancy over England, from which she falls, and must fall every hour more rapidly, by the natural operation of those principles on which the Corsican dynasty has been erected.

What is, then, the nature and inevitable result of a power so constituted as that of Buonaparte? To call it a despotism is not enough. We Britons cannot recognize a spark of freedom in any one of the greater Continental Monarchies. The Emperor of Austria, in his German territories,—the King of Prussia,—the Russian Emperor, in all—have the virtual prerogative of making laws, and of commanding the purses and persons of their subjects. These are despotisms to the sense of an English freeholder; but to the eye of a philosopher, they bear few practical features in common with that monstrous image of self-created force, which bestrides the French people.

One of the first requisites to the well-being of a nation, is a certain analogy between the nature of the government, and the stage and circumstance of the society over which it rules. A nice and uniform dispersion of powers, still more effectually tempered in their influence by the lenient spirit of prescription, is seldom found amongst a rude people; and may not be well adapted to their ferocious habits. Far less

can a sudden, fierce, and undivided despotism, with no motive but caprice, and no minister but violence, accommodate itself to the genius of an advanced and highly civilized community.

The other Monarchies on the Continent of Europe, if not coeval with the first recorded assemblages of their subjects, bear at least a strong resemblance in character and structure to those which they respectively succeeded. The governments and people have grown up together. Time and usage have mitigated the pressure of authority, and insensibly restrained its march, mellowing and blending the various branches of the body politic, by a series of affinities and reciprocal inclinations, which multiply as its movements continue. The subject bears through habit—the sovereign forbears through the same habit, combined with conscious strength. It is not thus with the French under Buonaparte. The old monarchy of France was, so far as regarded the direct operation of the Prince upon the people, a government of mildness and amenity. Sentiment and custom purified many vices, and palliated numberless theoretical abuses. It was the sway of a courteous monarchy, over a nation by far the most civilised, and, with one exception, the most enlightened in Europe. The causes of its overthrow are foreign to our present purpose. The consequence of it has been the birth of this bloody and scorching despotism,—this Giant, armed from his mother's womb, with sweeping scymetar and consuming fire. At the inward principle of such a political monster, we need

not be compelled to arrive by any tedious investigation, or any complex process: it is naked before us in its original elements,—presenting no object but undisguised force, in a state of furious and unrelenting activity.

Can such a Government be fit for such a people? Can a tyranny, operating by *direct* violence, and characteristic of the earliest periods in the most barbarous condition of mankind, have any quality adapted to the wants or feelings of a nation, grown old in arts, luxuries, and letters? Is it not plain to the least acute observer, that where the principles of such a Government, and such a stage of society, are so vehemently contrasted, there can be no immediate alliance; but that an incessant counteraction must ensue—that the Government, or the people, must change their character, before a just harmony and co-operation can exist between them—in other words, that one of them must yield? And from which are we to infer this ultimate submission to its rival? Has the Tyrant loosed his chains—has he relaxed his hold—or flung aside the whip of scorpions? No, it is France herself which is giving way. It is the French nation who gradually recede from the rest of the civilised world. Instead of the ruler ripening and mellowing to the same complexion with his subjects—the subjects have been forced to retrace the progress of whole centuries, and are at this moment falling back to those wild wastes of moral desolation, where alone the barbarian sceptre is unfelt. France, beneath this Minister of Heaven's vengeance

ance, exhibits no reproductive faculties. All is confiscation—all consumption—there is no second growth of affluence, intellect, or virtue. The state bears no interest in his hands. His taxes are the direct plunder of so much capital. His application of public industry is only to the arts of death—all other perishes for want of wholesome excitement! The last glimmerings of education amongst the body of the people are now but faintly seen; and the Christian religion made studiously contemptible, by the poverty and debasement of its professors. Let such a reign but flourish in the person of Buonaparte; let his offspring but adopt his principles, and who can fathom that gulph of irretrievable destruction which already yawns for our eternal foe? Sloth, poverty, and weakness, worse than ever sprung from Turkish policy, are fruits which less than fifty years must collect from this odious and self-dissolving power. Do I, then, feel the *spontaneous* and *unprovoked* desire, that such a mass of evil should be perpetuated for any portion of mankind? God forbid. If the French nation were not the unchangeable and everlasting enemies of England, there is no honest man who could wish them to be less prosperous and happy than England. But it is, I conscientiously believe, a question, *which of these two countries shall destroy the other* *. In that case my part is taken,—if France must be ruined, it is to save our native

* Every word and deed of the French government and people prove their determination to make it so,

country from being ruined. For this simple reason it is, that I urge the *necessity* of weakening Buonaparte. Hence it is, that I deprecate the restoration of the French colonies, which would give the enemy maritime power. Hence it is that we all, with one voice, should deprecate the restoration of the Bourbons*, which is moral power. If this be “perpetual war,” I cannot help it,—perpetual war has little terror, when perpetual bondage threatens us. If this be to constitute the British nation judges in their own cause, neither can we help it,—we have already become our own judges:—to speak more devoutly, we have appealed to Heaven;—the decree is our’s,—and shall we not keep what Providence has awarded? If this again be “exclusive patriotism,” who can understand the patriotism which is not exclusive? The word *implies* a preference of the claims and welfare of our own country to those of other—(and above all other) of rival countries. It is not indeed the philanthropy of Anacharsis Cloots,—it is not the dreary jargon of metaphysics, nor the shop-boy philosophy of a printer’s devil,—nor the *sans culotterie* of scholastic virtue. I am not actuated by that spirit of remorseless faction, which would ensnare the servants of the State into a system of passive warfare, whose failures and misfortunes might assist my project of supplanting them,—and which, by clearing the road for an abject and unprofitable peace, would

* But not *oppose* their restoration:—“perpetual war” belongs to those, whether French or English, who cry out for a peace that would be worse than war.

afford the facility of impeaching them. Let them fight vigorously, and negotiate wisely,—and it will not be the fault of such men as *Vetus* if they want defenders. From this ground, it is not in the malice or hypocrisy of party, to drive an upright Englishman. Let others cultivate that enlarged philosophy, which would preach to their country the calm endurance of disgrace. Let others practise that kind of patriotism, justly called “*exclusive*,” which burns or trembles for the sake of hostile nations, but from whose pale of tenderness, *England, England* only is “*excluded*.”

VETUS.

LETTER XXXVII.

Just Principles of Peace.

SIR,

DEC. 16, 1813.

My observation is fully verified. The newspapers * which personate “both extremes of Faction,” have commenced their allotted labour; finding in Vetus a common enemy to combat, and in England a common country to destroy.

One of these patriots enacts the part of a drawling hypocritical projector, whom no natural affection can move, nor individual happiness enliven. He is a regular brother of a well-known sect, which we of this generation have had the misfortune to behold in high activity,—and which having seen, it is but wisdom to remember. The men I speak of were those who in some degree precipitated the French Revolution, and who entirely perverted its possible uses,—the mongrel race of metaphysical enthusiasts, who undertook to change the objects of human feeling, that they might disappoint more effectually the ends for which it was bestowed. Such were the worshippers of the Strumpet-Goddess,

* *The Morning Chronicle and Morning Post-ess*, a pair of lovers equally gifted with all those beauties, powers, and accomplishments, which can bless and perpetuate their nuptial union

Reason ; a deity, in herself, and in the prostitute who represented her, convertible to purposes equally abandoned. The next step, after acknowledging this divinity, was to make a display of her power. Mankind were to be *reasoned* out of all human sensibilities—but the loss was to be supplied by reasoning them into a new assortment of sensibilities, on a larger and nobler scale. Brotherly regard was a puny sentiment!—what was a single brother to him, who felt that millions of freemen were his brothers? Marriage, too,—that holy, and heavenly, and heart-sustaining institution,—what, with its graceful and beautiful assemblage of bland obligations, and virtuous sympathies—how stood the fixed relation of husband and wife? Why, treason to natural liberty! “exclusive tenderness!”—a bar to the performance of those unconfined embraces, which spoke the reign of universal love. Parental affection, and filial piety, also were still less worthy to escape the blight of this ruthless philosophical reform. How narrow was the father’s mansion! How diminutive the mind which could look with reverence to the beings that gave it birth, when the republic, sole heiress of philanthropy and freedom,—the great republic, offered herself, as the fond and universal parent! Nor could the Sire, who argued logically, bewail the sacrifice of his devoted offspring. His children,—not his, but their country” children,—were to be educated *by*, and for that country! His paternal feelings were not to be extinguished,—no—nothing more than transferred to

the State, and ennobled by the magnitude of the object. This same republic was a perfect "Scrub." She was to play the sister, husband, wife, son, and mother,—confiscating and appropriating the individual duties, rights, and charities of mankind,—ransacking the deepest recesses of the heart,—and seizing as prizes to her sovereign will, the royalties and wrecks of human nature.

But the phrenzy did not terminate here. It was not enough that all the relations of life should merge in that of citizen: even "exclusive patriotism" was a vulgar thought. In the paroxysms of disorder, it was sometimes proposed, that the citizen himself should evaporate into a citizen of the world. The universal republic,—the vast family of mankind,—the deputations from the human race,—became instruments with the knaves who led, and visions for the dupes who admired. There can really be no objection to this superfine theory, but that it is inconsistent with the order of Providence, and destructive of the character of man,—that it unfixes our moral land-marks,—melts into air every *practical* virtue and definite duty,—substitutes words for salutary deeds,—and by directing our most natural and useful passions to objects indistinct or unattainable, leaves these powerful agents afloat, and ends by abusing them to the production of crime and misery. Such were the results of that system of speculation, which assumed for its basis the existence of a species of beings, far above the pitch of humanity,—and which, in its application

to human affairs, reduced them to the level of brutes.

A sucker from the root of this poisonous vegetable is again in blossom, and threatens the desolation of society. We are called upon to abdicate the right and obligation of preferring and protecting our native country, that is, of enjoying our proper advantages, and of discharging our *specific* trusts,—and for what? Why, that we may undertake the preposterous office, and execute the factitious duty, of handing over to a mortal enemy the greatness to which we have waded through blood and fire,—and raising his empire on the ruins of our own. Beware, we are warned, “of neglecting the interests of the adversary.” It is our peculiar business to guard the rights of France!—“since experience and reason may equally convince us, that she acknowledges the condition to be reciprocal,—and that our rights will be, as they have ever been, held sacred in her hands,—and safe in her protection!”

The circumstances attempted by certain journals, on the views of Vetus with regard to peace, appear so desultory, equivocal and confused, that it would be a task of no small labour to reduce them to order and intelligence. When fully understood, the trouble is over. The objections, so far as they are tangible at all, may be comprised under two heads,—which, nevertheless, do not embrace the poetical quotations.

1st. It is stated with much phrase, that when one Power lays it down as a maxim, that *the*

existence of an enemy is incompatible with her safety, she compels that enemy to fight *for his existence*.

I admit the position in its most extensive latitude; but there has been a slight mistake in its application. It is an audacious plagiarism from the portfolio of the French minister, to impute his own doctrines to other countries, and to visit their Cabinets with reproaches due only to himself. It is a base fraud and imposture in this English theophilanthropist to transfer such offensive and destructive principles from France, which was their author, to England, who has so nearly become their victim. Who, I ask, was the first to publish that dreadful notice, that the independent “existence” of other nations” was death to her glory, and must therefore be the victim of her policy? Who has actually refused every approach to peace which would leave her enemies the shadow of public freedom? Who has been the founder of this shocking creed—who the aggressor—who the persecutor of England, to the avowed purpose of destroying England? Is not this, and more than this, fairly chargeable, and universally charged upon the French Government? And if there be evidence of this wickedness in every act—and if the scheme of robbery and conquest be so rooted in the Constitution of the French system, that it never has been for one moment relinquished in spirit, and only in form, to gain time and to deceive—I ask any man who is not an incurable maniac, or a wilful traitor, what wisdom there is for this country or for Europe,

except in the reduction of the gigantic power of France? Who is it that has imposed upon her enemy the necessity of fighting "for his existence?" I am not to be deterred from pursuing this argument to its just and necessary conclusion, by the factious or hypocritical clamour of its tending to involve us in "eternal war." It is no expression of mine,—and it is a deliberate falsehood in him who asserts, that I have used it—"that we *have* no alternative between eternal war and eternal bondage." My statement was this. France is bent upon the ruin of England;—while she exists, she will desire it—while she exists in all her acquired force, she will sooner or later effect it. To diminish the power of France is easier (and it is already half completed) than to extirpate her animosity. We have, therefore, but three roads before us:—To procure such terms of peace as may disable her from molesting us;—or to carry on the war as a less evil than peace, with France unimpaired in power;—or, making peace without that essential security, to prepare for ultimate bondage. It is not England, but France herself—it is not *Vetus*, but the French Government—which has broached, promulgated, and established the creed, that one of these countries must, in the end, destroy the other. Let not the enemy's partisans condemn us for crimes of their own commission. We are, and ever have been, purely on the defensive. If we could once have testimony beyond mere words, that France would behold the welfare of England with the common charity of a civilised neighbour—if she would fairly

give up that cruel and horrible ambition of reducing us to slavery, and these islands to ruin—if she would but cease to force upon us, as the only means left for our preservation, the adoption of those principles of extreme jealousy and hostility of which *she is herself* the foundress, for our overthrow—I do not say only that we ought to banish the desire of weakening Buonaparte—I do not say, as I have before broadly and unequivocally asserted, in some former part of these letters, that we ought to tolerate, to rejoice at, and to promote by every means at our disposal, the prosperity and progress of the French nation,—but I do affirm in so many words, that *as a commercial people*, and finding it consistent with sound discretion to reckon on France as a friendly and *commercial neighbour*, her affluence and aggrandizement would be more valuable to England than that of any country in Europe besides. The home market for our industry is the best. The foreign market nearest home is, *ceteris paribus*, the second best. Thus would it be with Britain and France, if the curse of military ambition were withdrawn; and if the phials of envy, wrath, and vengeance, were not poured out to obliterate the fair page of human happiness. But we are forced from our way,—we are thrown by adversaries whom we never provoked, into that state of terror and trouble which makes violence, not benevolence, the only sort of intercourse between nations. We are driven to consult, not our prosperity, but our safety. Asking to be released from this intolerable condi-

tion, we seek nothing more than security against its return,—we do not originate the language nor the scheme of desolation. We are bound to retaliate with weapons like those which assault us. But we fight against an enemy who respects no compact which he has the means to break; and the annihilation or reduction of such means must therefore be a preliminary to our becoming parties to the compact.

2dly. It is alleged, as a proof of inconsistency in Vetus, that he holds out France as an object of terror, and yet recommends a negociation with Buonaparte, because his government is calculated to make France in time less formidable. If this be consistent, the English language must be constructed anew. Buonaparte the conqueror,—Buonaparte left in possession of his conquests,—is, I should suppose, to every rational being, an object of extreme and unceasing terror. The physical resources arising from his foreign spoliations must render him not to England only, but to every State within the reach of his arms or his threats, a perpetual torment and disturbance. But it is not enough to consider Buonaparte in his own person and character as a poison to the peace of Europe. Much more of the mischievous ascendancy of France has been ascribed to her ruler than truth or justice would permit. The fact is, that he did not form the destructive engine; he found it. He did not make his own materials; he administered boldly (though prodigally), it is true, the materials which were prepared to his

hand. He did not cause the volcano to burst,—he hastened and directed the torrent of lava, which followed the great explosion. The revolution itself was the real enemy to mankind. It has worked more fiercely, and been exhausted, in my opinion, more speedily, under the feverish regimen enforced by Buonaparte, than it would under the guidance of a more cautious spirit. Let who might be the Sovereigns of France, it would be madness to repose faith in the moderation of that people,—of a people who, for more than a century, have aided with ardour every plan of aggression undertaken by their successive Monarchs. Their songs,—their very sermons,—their daily and nightly dreams, have turned round the axis of universal empire. I say, therefore, that France, under any King or any Consulate, must be reduced within limits compatible with the safety of Europe. I have never conceived the visionary, and thinking as I do, the atrocious project, of imposing by compulsion a Government on France. Having long ago expressed my formal belief, that the mere menace of invading the French frontier would furnish Buonaparte with a powerful handle over the passions and nationality of the French people, it would indeed have laid me open to the charge of inconsistency, had I recommended, or should I now forbear to deprecate, the contemplation of a measure so much more offensive to their feelings. He *has* appealed to his subjects—and apparently with success. So far as any *facts* have come to our knowledge, they have linked themselves

to his fortunes—and will perish, if they are to perish, with him. It is not, therefore, in my imagination to separate Buonaparte from the people of France. Without risking an opinion as to the possibility of their immediate revolt, it is clear, that such a consequence would be utterly defeated by compulsion. Nor has it ever fallen from my lips or my pen, though asserted by a frivolous and despicable journal, that England should refuse any peace to France, which did not directly go to her destruction. Though England ought not to stir one inch towards the restoration of the Bourbon family to the throne; yet if their countrymen should recal them to that precarious eminence, who has ever hinted a disinclination to make peace with the Bourbons? Again, although the French people must decide the matter for themselves, yet I would prefer, if the choice of an individual could settle it,—I would prefer Buonaparte as a Sovereign for that people;—because, still regarding them, in peace and war, as our *unchangeable and everlasting enemies*, his government would ultimately render them less powerful enemies than that of their ancient Monarchs. The fallacy and sophistry have in this case sprung from assuming, that I had insisted as an express stipulation by treaty on measures directly productive of that ruin to France, on which it was obvious I had but remotely speculated; a ruin naturally and slowly resulting from the duration and principle of the Government with which we should have treated.

Of all the accusations—(and I almost blush to

honour them with this notice)—of the accusations yet imagined against my arguments on the question of peace, the happiest is that of “throwing obstacles” in the way of peace, by the same letter which commended the wisdom of treating with Buonaparte. Which class of negociators, one may presume to ask, would be most likely to bring home a treaty, signed and executed by the ministers of Buonaparte—those who stipulated that France should make the Rhine her German frontier; or those who gravely tendered the proposition, that Napoleon should abdicate his Imperial crown?

The natural difficulties attendant on a general peace are, God knows, enough, without studiously adding to their number. From the north of Italy *to the south of Holland*, it is a thorny, painful, and crooked path. How far the late declaration of the confederates at Frankfort may clear the obstructions, or accelerate the result, will of course appear hereafter. The general principles of that showy paper are admirably well calculated to affect the public mind, should any such thing exist in France; and I cannot see ground for censure, or indeed for suspicion, in any circumstances that belong to it, except the following,—that it was issued *without any communication* to our Ministers. Considering the noble and generous manner in which the British government has behaved to its allies, I confess that in the execution of so important a measure as the setting forth a paper so strong and decisive, I think Great Britain ought to have been at least consulted.

Was it a slight? That would be to annex a degree of levity, both to the transaction itself and to its authors, which we are bound to hope that the latter could not practise. Did it arise from a determination to act for themselves, and give to France a pledge uncontrolled by Great Britain? Or did they merely entertain a doubt, whether England would agree to all the contents of that paper*? Of its several passages I have read but one which bears a vague, suspicious, and so far a reprehensible cha-

* Buonaparte has availed himself, with great industry, of the indefinite language of the Frankfort declaration. The diplomatic intercourse between him and the Allies seems covered with studious, if not impenetrable, darkness. The confederate Monarchs accuse him of rejecting overtures which would have left France more powerful and extensive than in former times. He retorts upon them, that he *has accepted* their offer, but that they have disdained his acceptance. The fact of his unequivocal compliance with their proposals is more than doubtful—and his motives for evasion are, at the same time, very difficult to understand. Did he exaggerate the degree of support on which he might reckon from the people of France, should an enemy attack their frontier? The public mind in other countries has, indeed, most egregiously deceived him; but what means his high police—with the vast faculties and perfections ascribed to his grand system of *Espionage*—if the feelings of the people at the seat of empire, and under the actual management of his own creatures, should assume a false colouring, and betray him into miscalculations? After all, if the French can remain unmoved by the fear of plunder, of violence, or conquest, Buonaparte may thank himself for that extinction of the public spirit, which it has been the chief aim of his whole domestic administration to produce—and to which so keen a tyrant would naturally turn, as the basis and security of his despotic power.

racter. It is the sentence which states that the Allies had offered Buonaparte a territory greater than any King of France had enjoyed. Now, upon the face of this, there appears nothing to blame. If the German frontier of France were carried to the Rhine, the words of the declaration would stand good, and in a sense which is by no means liable to objection. It is not the necessary, but the possible, meaning of these phrases, which strike me as being fraught with anxiety and alarm. It is not the pledge that France should keep something, but the suppression of *what* she should be suffered to retain. It is scarcely to be conceived that Ministers should look with satisfaction or confidence on that manifesto. It certainly is capable of one construction, which would not only justify the resentment, but call for the strenuous resistance of Ministers—and obtain for them, in that resistance, the unanimous support of the British nation. The subject of Holland is so beset with perplexities of infinite and various importance, that one almost says too much for discretion, by saying enough to be understood. But if the recent state paper from Frankfort should turn out to be the precursor only of a relaxation in the military efforts of the confederates, with a view to the recovery of Dutch Brabant, we should be no longer ignorant of the feelings which they indulged towards the allied Dutch and English nations—nor, I trust, undecided as to those measures and that policy which became the honour of Great Britain.

I have already pushed this letter to a length which

compels me to leave many useful topics untouched. A recapitulation of the heads of an advantageous, and (with submission to the English friends of Buonaparte *) no very unreasonable treaty of peace, may save me the trouble of noticing in future much perverse sophistry, and some rather stupid impertinence. These principles of pacification, with one exception, now required by a solicitude for the freedom of the Dutch people, were hinted at, if not dwelt upon, in the two latest papers which I addressed to you :—

1st. That we should negotiate with Buonaparte, even more willingly than with the Bourbons.

2dly. That on the side of Germany, France might extend her ancient limits to the Rhine.

3dly. That a *Flemish frontier* should be secured for Holland, including the Austrian Netherlands.

4thly. That in all other quarters France should retire within her former territory.

5thly. That the foreign colonies of France, which

* The factious babblers for peace, on terms advantageous to the enemy, were not less at home in their profession during the wars of the Duke of Marlborough than they are now. They laboured hard to nullify the victories of that hero;—and with such success, that we are indebted to them for the peace of Utrecht. The gentry of the present day would act the same part by Lord Wellington as their forefathers did by his glorious predecessor. But it were treason (I presume) to charge them with similar motives: since the peacemakers of that time were *in the pay of France!* They indeed were Tories—in 1813 it is certain of the Whig journalists who copy them—shall we then dare to call those Tories traitors?

England did not hold it essential to retain, should be on certain terms transferred to such of her European Allies whose future friendship she might consider most valuable and certain, instead of restoring them to France herself, from whose maritime power and known ambition she would have every evil to anticipate.

A most intricate and laborious question remains, with regard to the former petty States of Germany. The subject is far from being ripe for discussion. But I shall conclude with the wise observation of Mr. Baring, that the revival of these lesser sovereignties, in all their parts, might again destroy the whole fabric of the Balance of Power.

VETUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Reply to General Sarrazin.*

SIR,

MONDAY, NOV. 15, 1813.

GENERAL SARRAZIN is undoubtedly an experienced officer, and as such, when he writes on military subjects, entitled to some attention. For my own part, I always read his observations with a sincere hope of being not only amused but instructed, by novel facts, or just reasonings. But the higher his authority amongst military men, the greater danger there appears of our suffering it to mislead us, by surrendering to him the use of our own judgments. In his letter of the 8th instant, which appeared in *The Times* of last Saturday, the 13th, I find the General at infinite pains to prove, that if “the Emperor

* This letter was drawn from the author by one from the above-named French General in *The Times*. The situation of that officer may be distressing—but ought his temper to have been soothed, at the exorbitant, nay, insulting price, demanded for his alleged services to our Government?—The *only* case by which General Sarrazin has attempted to defend his abandonment of the French army is personal dissatisfaction at the conduct of that Government towards himself—was this a merit on which to build such inordinate pretensions as those with which he has beset our Ministers? I have no objection to his endeavouring once more to make his peace with Buonaparte—but he must abstain from attacking the cause of Europe through the sides of her most able and victorious leaders.

Napoleon" pleased, he might have totally ruined our Allies on the Continent,—and that it was owing entirely to his having made "a hundred and one mistakes," while we made only "a hundred," that his army of 400,000 strong was "not *triumphant on the Vistula a month ago*," instead of their melancholy remains (which he, however, calculates at 100,000!) being forced to hide their shame amongst the fortresses of the Rhine.

The General begins by calling it "an unpardonable error," that the Allies sent the élite of their army into Bohemia. This, indeed, is a very bold assertion; and as it is but an assertion, not supported by the shadow of argument, I shall take the liberty of calling it a mere *petitio principii*.

Though not so old an officer, nor of so high rank, as General Sarrazin, I beg leave to doubt the justice of this censure on the establishment of the grand allied army in Bohemia. It is evident from the map, that this great movement placed the confederate force immediately on the communications of the enemy. The effect of this must inevitably be, to deter Buonaparte from advancing towards that Vistula, on which, according to General Sarrazin, he ought, a month ago, to have been triumphant—for, in fact, we do find that this interposition of the Allies in his rear did on every occasion operate so as to distract and paralyze the whole of his efforts in Silesia, by compelling him to relinquish the attack on General Blücher, whenever Prince Schwartzberg made a feint of renewing the assault on Dresden.

General Sarrazin himself admits, that the post which the confederates occupied in Bohemia was, not one which always left open to them *a secure retreat*; and, indeed, his expressions, when he wishes to find fault with Buonaparte's manœuvres, I conceive to be decisive against his own critique upon the choice of position by the Allies—inasmuch as he declares, that Buonaparte had every thing to lose by “attacking Prince Schwartzemberg with equal forces, in a country which offered to the Allies *a succession of advantageous positions*—and in case of a triple check, *a secure retreat* under the walls of Prague.” Now, Sir, if the Commander in Chief selected a position, where he could not be attacked without manifest loss to the enemy,—which enabled him at the same time to threaten and intercept the main communications of that enemy, and to defend Silesia indirectly by ruining every plan of attack upon Blucher,—I would submit to you my belief, that it requires something more than the naked dictum of General Sarrazin to condemn such a plan of campaign as “a most unpardonable error.”

We must believe, according to General Sarrazin, that “one consequence of this error was the commission of a still greater—the attack of the re- doubts before Dresden.”

However unfortunate the result of that attack, I have many doubts whether the *plan* of it was an error. Moreau calls the defeat of it (*decoussu*) a failure of plan. The plain meaning of this I take to be, that some unlucky circumstance,—the roads, top

weather, both of which we know to have been dreadful,—or possibly the mistake of an order by some individual corps, gave rise to an unlooked-for *delay*, and thus enabled Buonaparte to reach Dresden, with the flower of his troops from Silesia, time enough to assist in repulsing the Allies. Had their attack anticipated his march, it is probable that the success of the confederate Powers might have obtained for this decided movement some more favourable description than that of a fault, even from your criticising correspondent.

But whatever may be the merit of the manœuvre in itself, I deny that it was a necessary consequence of the choice of Bohemia for a main position. The Allies might have advanced so as only to menace the Saxon capital,—or in such a direction as, if they pleased, to force Napoleon to fight for the liberty of retreating. They have since compelled him so to fight.

We are next informed by General Sarrazin, that after the affair of the 27th of August, Buonaparte “ought to have pursued the grand allied army with the 1st and 19th corps under Vandamme and St. Cyr.” What might be the amount of these two corps? Probably about 50,000 men. And what is likely to have been the consequence of such a pursuit? Certainly the total destruction of the pursuers. The allied force which retired from Dresden—but which did not retire as a defeated army—mustered at least 150,000 admirable soldiers; and these, according to General Sarrazin, ought to have been

pursued by 50 or 55,000 at most! Really this seems to me a very questionable mode of correcting the errors of Buonaparte; though it might, I confess, have led to a certain method of *chastising* them.

While Vandamme was thus to pursue an army triple in number to his own, and by a small portion of which army he was afterwards totally destroyed, Buonaparte, we are told, ought himself to have moved upon Berlin—when we should have had “renewed the scenes of Prince Hohenloe and General Blucher after the battle of Jena.” Here, Sir, I am afraid there is another begging of the question. We must first have witnessed another battle of Jena. But to ensure such a consequence of the march of the French towards the North, we are informed that, 1st, “The Crown Prince’s army must have been destroyed by the combined attacks of Davoust, the Danes, Girard, Oudinot, &c. &c. together with the reinforcements under Buonaparte.” On this I shall only observe, that to risk a battle against so superior a force, would not have been consistent with any known rule of war; and to suppose the Crown Prince ignorant of its approach, would be to deny him every essential qualification for the great command which he has hitherto exercised in a manner so brilliant, and so decisive in its influence on the results of this glorious campaign.

2dly. To obviate this objection, that the Prince would save his army by declining the combat—General Sarrazin assures us, that he would have found himself “surrounded in a *cul de sac*”—the meaning

of which is, that he could not run away. Now I cannot bring myself to understand this assertion. Buonaparte must have advanced by the same route as was at that time occupied by the army of Oudinot. Have we then any proof, or ground to conjecture, that Oudinot had worked himself into the Prince's rear? Have we the slightest reason to presume, that Buonaparte would have succeeded in surprising the Prince Royal? If not, how was he to be thrown into this cul de sac? And was there any earthly impediment to his retreat upon *the Oder*, with Prussian Pomerania, if necessary, in his rear? The corps under Davoust must have been wholly apart from this expedition—and that under Count Walmoden, if alarmed for its rear, might retire upon Stralsund in perfect safety.

To this I shall no farther intrude upon you than to add—that the Grand Army, all the time, by only masking Dresden, might have brought forward 100,000 men, directly upon Erfurth, Cassel, and the Rhine—and in that case I beg leave to ask, what would have been the end of Buonaparte's crusade against Berlin?

Upon the whole, it is my deliberate conviction, that the movement of the Grand Army into Bohemia, which opened the campaign, and the movement of the Crown Prince across the Saale, by which it was in a great measure concluded, merit the same species of panegyric, and almost in the same degree.—To the first we may attribute remotely, and to the se-

cond immediately, the battles of Leipsic, and the total overthrow of Buonaparte.

I have no wish to commit myself against General Sarrazin. I respect his talents, and feel for his situation. But as it appears to me that our assent to his theory on the subject of this warfare would be a collateral depreciation of the martial genius and virtue actually exhibited by the illustrious leaders of the Allies, and so far an abridgment of our own honest pride and joy, I trust you will, in your accustomed spirit of candour, admit my remarks into *The Times*. Of all etherial edifices, the easiest and most seducing to a man of ability is that of a campaign in the clouds—General Dumourier has for many years shewn himself in that line a most extensive architect. It is due to your correspondent to acknowledge, that his professional name, as a scientific soldier, stands independent of such visionary speculations.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

A BRITISH OFFICER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sinking Fund *.

STOCK EXCHANGE, MARCH 31, 1813.

SIR,

I SHOULD blush to obtrude upon you such commonplace observations as occur to a plain man upon a

* There is not in society a man more justly esteemed or respected than Mr. Vansittart—But the Author has not yet changed his opinion on the dreadful shock given to our whole System of Finance by the measure here adverted to.—There is another transaction on record of nearly the same date, and though of trifling comparative extent, attended with a most extraordinary miscarriage—namely, that wherein it was proposed to combine the operation of a loan for three or six millions (I believe six) with the funding of Exchequer Bills.—The business began by funding the Exchequer Bills at a price very favourable to the holders—all which was done;—but as an *inducement* to take this good price for their bills, which required, one would think, no temptation at all,—the parties were told, that every one who did so should *have the option of paying a still higher price* for debentures,—to the amount of the loan wanted; accordingly no more than 500,000*l.* was raised.—Now had Mr. Vansittart reversed his terms, and said, “whoever will buy my debentures at the price I want, shall *receive* (as a bonus) a good price for his Exchequer Bill”—it is probable that he would have raised the loan in an hour. And yet Mr. V.’s reputation for a sound knowledge of our finances stands on a level with that of any man of his day. The mischief is, that they (the bankers and loan contractors) who could best detect the errors of the Treasury, are those who profit by them most.

very dry subject, were it not to assist in drawing the attention of your enlightened readers towards this desperate project now taken up by the Ministry—for overturning the whole scheme of English finance. It is needless to remark, that for considerably more than twenty years this country has laboured through unheard-of difficulties—that she has encountered and subdued them all—and that, by making the maintenance of her integrity the first object, she has been enabled to compass every other. If you were to ask any reflecting Englishman, or any well-informed foreigner, to what was owing the universal confidence reposed in the finances of Great Britain—and the prodigious value annexed to English stock, at times when every other State was bankrupt, and when individuals of the most solvent and substantial fortunes found it impossible to raise money but on exorbitant terms—the universal answer would plainly be, that all this arose from the accumulating power, and inviolable character, of our Sinking Fund.

Not only is the Sinking Fund the public creditor's security for the ultimate satisfaction of his claim—but in fact he has *no other security*. How, then, stands the case? When a private person goes to raise money in the market, he finds the difficulty of doing so increased, as the nature and amount of his security are diminished. Nay more: since the Annuity Act has led to a practical relaxation of the laws respecting usurious interest, it always happens, that as less security is offered, a higher interest is

demanded—the loan being considered in the nature of an insurance policy, where the premium invariably rises with the risk. Now, Sir, the nation, since the year 1792, has raised sums of immense magnitude, on extremely moderate terms, for this reason chiefly, amongst many others,—that it was a peremptory condition of each successive bargain to have a certain fund, namely, the Sinking Fund, assigned over for the benefit of the public creditor, so as to insure within a given period the absolute liquidation of the debt. If that condition had not existed,—if that Fund had not been so assigned,—can any man believe that the rate of interest demanded by the lenders would not have risen in the same proportion, as the chance of ultimately recovering their principal was reduced? If, then, such was the obligation under which the debt was contracted—by what rule of morality, of justice, or of common sense, is the party borrowing, after having pocketed his money, at liberty to shake off, or diminish, or in the most minute particular evade, that burthen of obligation which he undertook to bear; by which he secured the confidence of the party lending—and persuaded him to lower his terms?

Let me put the question to any man in the least acquainted with pecuniary transactions—but more especially with the history of public credit—Could Government have raised any one of their loans on the favourable terms of which they regularly boasted, if the most remote apprehension had been entertained

by the monied interest, that at any period, much less so early a period, in the operation of the Sinking Fund, any part of that sacred property would be diverted from the honest purpose of paying off old debts, due to existing creditors—for the sake of enabling some ignorant and short-sighted Minister to pay higher interest, at a future day, on money to be borrowed from another set of creditors? Such is, however wrapped up and involved in technical phraseology, the whole substance of Mr. Vansittart's plan.—He refuses to pay, as the nation was bound to do, the principal of the debt already contracted, that he may, with the money so withheld from its rightful owners, discharge the interest of new debts, indefinite in their periods, their amount, and their conditions, to be incurred through his agency hereafter. Is this upright? is it wise? Unless the stockholders at large looked forward originally to such a revolution—what is it but the basest fraud, to put them in a worse condition than that which they meditated when they lent their money? What, but a fraud accomplished by mere force of arms—in other words, a downright robbery? If the security of the public creditor be encroached upon, (and that such is the operation of the present project, no man will now deny), give him at least some equivalent for that advantage, which he would in the first instance have had the option to embrace or to refuse—*add something to his annual interest*—increase your premium, as you enhance his risk.

We are told, that the Sinking Fund is not en-

croached upon, but its system “strengthened, and “its benefits diffused,” by the experiment. Really this, from a grave, orthodox personage, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is in a style of poetry rather inaccessible to vulgar brains. The Sinking Fund is strengthened—by carrying off a large portion of it to purposes for which it never was designed!—and as for the vaunted diffusion of its benefits—we may substitute the term *transferred*, for diffused—transferred from the public creditor, whose lawful property it is—to the present Minister, who is interested but as its guardian—and who knows that, by the abuse of a sacred trust, he forfeits only his reputation—whereas by the imposition of an unpopular tax, he might probably lose—his place.

Again, we are informed by the Right Hon. George Rose, who, when money was the topic, never yet left a Minister in the lurch—this ancient Alchymist thinks fit to inform us, that if the debt be redeemed in forty-five years, the public creditor can ask no more—and has no cause of complaint in any preceding measures, which do not go to defeat the possibility of such redemption, at the end of the period specified. Well and wisely Mr. Tierney rejoins—that the redemption of a certain debt by the end of a certain time, implies the redemption of determinate and equable proportions of that debt in given periods of time, according to a fixed and uniform law of progression;—and Mr. Tierney’s meaning is aptly illustrated by the question—Why should the proprietor of old stock in the year 1814 meet a

less ample measure of justice than the stock-holder in 1830?—Why should the principles on which the Sinking Fund was established be glaringly violated at the former period, if it is a rule of conscience that they are to be restored hereafter?

Upon this subject of the total redemption being settled to take place in 45 years from the date of the loan, we may observe, that the end proposed by the great founder of the Sinking Fund, and the means through which that end was to be effected, ought fairly to be looked at as one regular whole. The simple and peremptory law, by which the engine has acted throughout, was coeval with it,—and is essential to it. Any man might have dealt in loose promises, that he would pay so many millions in a given time: but the whole credit assumed by Mr. Pitt was for the severe, inflexible, and intelligible regulations, through a conscientious adherence to which, he proved to the people that his promises were not meant to deceive them. It was not merely that he assigned over a fund professedly for this or that purpose—it was that he laid down one main fundamental principle, as the basis and support of his institution—namely, that under no temptation—no depression—in no change of party—of policy—or fortune, should this sacred treasure be prostituted to any object, other than the discharge of the national debt. This obligation has been hitherto religiously adhered to, and has won the confidence of the monied world. Mr. Vansittart tells us, that we have precedents for the fatal demolition which

he proposes, inasmuch as the action of the Sinking Fund had already undergone some changes, in the years 1798, 1802, &c. These changes were strictly confined to forms—they left principles, essentially, untouched. It has been reserved for the present Ministry, not to regulate—but to annihilate—this grand mover and stimulus of our finance. Now, for the first time, it is unblushingly declared, that the Sinking Fund shall be a Sinking Fund no longer—that the purpose for which it was solemnly instituted shall give place to one quite foreign to its nature,—and that a treasure set apart for the extinction of the public debt shall be perverted into *a bonus on its increase*.

But to relieve us under the agitation of this frightful shock—we are flattered by Mr. Vansittart that at some future period the Sinking Fund shall not only resume its course, but proceed with an accelerated velocity, and with unexampled vigour! And are we to take the promise of any Minister, for an event which can never happen until long after his official responsibility must be at an end? If Mr. Vansittart cajoles us this year out of two millions of money from the Sinking Fund,—for no reason under Heaven, that I can perceive, but because he confesses his own incapacity to raise fresh taxes,—what answer can we make to his successor the year following, when he comes with an enlarged demand, and under a more cogent necessity? On what principle can we refuse five millions next year, and five more the year after,—until the whole of the Sinking Fund

shall be absorbed by the interest on new loans,—and none at all left applicable to our relief from old burthens? The only safe line is to have it entire and unbroken,—the first inroad is big with bankruptcy, and ruin.

This attack upon the Sinking Fund must have an immediate effect on the terms of the approaching loan. An unstable security will soon be felt in the rate of interest, at which we are driven to raise money. Every following bargain will be worse than that which goes before it,—as wants increase, and means diminish, in a ratio always progressive. Thus, instead of advancing by compound interest to the ultimate liquidation of our debts—we shall have to contract them under multiplied and growing disadvantages—and to resist their accumulation with a declining power.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rests his defence on the difficulty of imagining productive taxes. This is to be expected from a weak and selfish Ministry. For my part I believe the English nation would cheerfully prefer an increase of their burthens, to this dishonest, fallacious, and destructive expedient, for granting them a temporary respite. Why should not the property tax be increased, on the same ground on which it was formerly imposed? Why should the vast export of our colonial produce and manufactures to the Continent be exempt from such a moderate duty at home, as might now be raised without any sensible diminution of the demand by foreigners—who, after their long privation,

will have them at any price, short of the bayonet in their breasts—while our revenue would draw an immense supply from such a source; and the whole weight of the tax fall at last on the foreign consumers? I do not deny that some clamour might arise from entailing a fresh burthen on this nation—but they are base Ministers who engross all the sweets of power, and leave every odious duty to their successors. The unpopularity of taxation is a salutary check upon the public servants;—a mischief, therefore, inseparable from the scheme now brought into Parliament, is the ease with which a Minister may provide the means of borrowing *ad libitum* for the present hour—while he escapes the responsibility, when he delivers up the seals of office; leaving to those who come after him the thankless management of a wasted inheritance, and an irrecoverable credit.

The last point on which I shall trouble you, and that but briefly, is Mr. Vansittart's doctrine of the despondency which must be excited amongst Buonaparte and the French nation, when they discover that England has the means of continuing the war, for four years to come, without additional taxes. If Buonaparte could be convinced that the English Government were able to realise loans without interest—and that the people paid nothing for the sums which they procured, I grant you it is a conviction which he would receive without much pleasure—though doubtless with no small astonishment. But seeing that there is no immediate prospect of raising

a loan interest free,—and being, as he is, moreover, pretty well aware, that the interest payable, be it great or little, no matter from what stock, or under what name it comes, must find its way out of some one or other of John Bull's numerous pockets, I really cannot paint to myself any extraordinary degree of affliction resulting to Napoleon from this proof of English prosperity. We ought to remember, that the promised exemption from new taxes is accompanied by an avowal on the part of Ministers themselves, that to suggest a new tax would be *impossible*. We may also remark, that the fund now seized upon to answer the interest of what we borrow is resorted to for no other reason, than the declared persuasion of men in office, that the nation is wholly destitute of all other resource—and, however they may distort this awkward circumstance into a theme of gratulation, I am of opinion that Buonaparte would be somewhat more shocked to see us laying on taxes for four years longer—than thus reduced to prosecute a consuming war, *after* it had been confessed, that we were incapable of farther taxation.

I am, Sir, &c.

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I am, Sir, &c.

JOHN A. KIDDER

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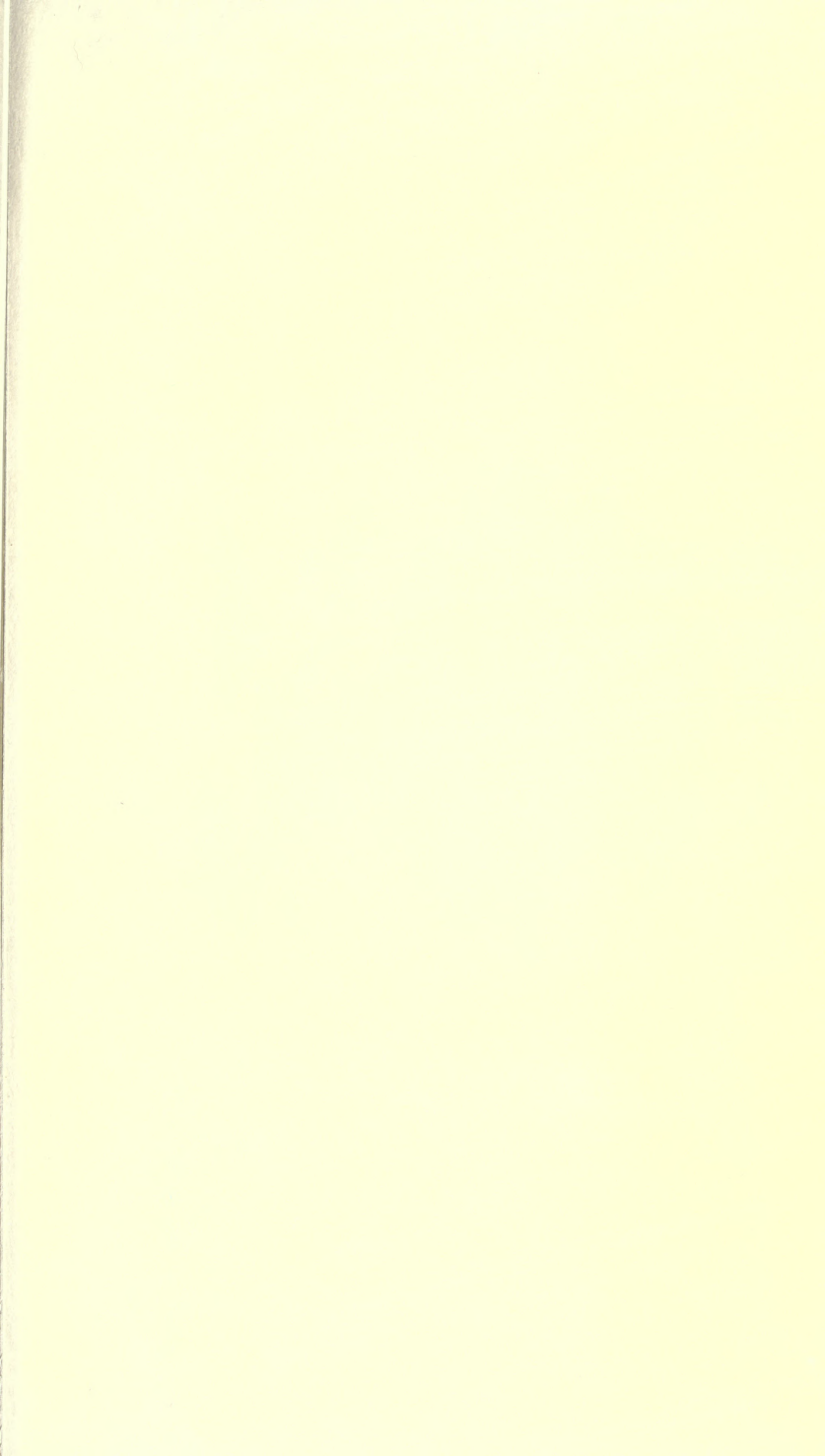
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